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Irving

EDWARD IRVING:

AN ECCLESIASTICAL AND LITERARY BIOGRAPHY.

BY

WASHINGTON WILKS,

AUTHOR OF A HISTORY OF THE HALF-CENTURY, ETC

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TO

THOMAS CARLYLE, Esq.,

AS TO THE MOST TRUSTED OF PHILOSOPHERS AND THE

MOST ADMIRED OF HISTORIANS,

AND TO

THE REV. F. D. MAURICE, M.A.,

AS TO AN ELOQUENT PREACHER AND EMINENT RELIGIOUS

REFORMER,

THIS MEMORIAL

OF THEIR COMMON FRIEND,

IS DEDICATED

BY THEIR COMMON DISCIPLE,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THE history of this volume must be its justification. About two years ago I was requested by the editor of the 'Biographical Magazine,' to write a sketch of Edward Irving—for whom I was known to entertain feelings of warm, yet unsectarian, admiration. Those feelings constituted at the time almost my only special qualification for such a task;—for Edward Irving died when I was but a child—and a vivid recollection of his person and bearing, with an inherited reverence for his qualities of mind and heart, could hardly be deemed a sufficient substitute for the personal knowledge usually required of biographers. The pains I took to qualify myself for the slight performance required of me,—the pleasure I found in studying and setting-forth, however imperfectly, the lineaments of my father's last, best friend,—and the favour with which the attempt was received by some who had the most reason to be

dissatisfied—moved me to the resolution of undertaking this larger work. I knew that the time was not come, or that I was certainly not the man, to tell the whole story of a life which appeared the more wonderful the more it was contemplated; but to the production of such a memorial as this,—modest in pretension, however difficult in execution; catholic and independent, fervent though free,—I felt that public sentiment was not unfriendly, nor myself ill-fitted.

In the fulfilment of my purpose, I have received essential aid from the family and some friends of Mr. Irving—especially from the Rev. J. L. Miller, who was gratefully associated in my oldest memories with him; and whose recovered friendship, with that of Mrs. Irving, her son, and daughter (alas! there were but lately two sisters), I count more than a compensation for any displeasure of religious sentiment unavoidably offended. But while to them I owe these thanks,—mine alone, be it understood, is the responsibility for all statements and opinions herein contained. I hope there will be found, however, no graver error—the plan and spirit of the performance being accepted—than the occasional misplace of a comma, or other artistic blemish, which must displease my reader less than it can displease myself.

Holloway, October, 1854. W. W.

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EDWARD IRVING.

CHAPTER I.

THE MAN IN PREPARATION.

On the north side, and nearly at the top, of that beautiful estuary the Solway Frith—oppo- Annan.
site to the ancient city of Carlisle, and within a few miles of the famed Gretna Green—is the little sea-port and market-town of Annan. The port is constituted of a quay, a wooden pier, and a few cottages. The town is about two miles from the landing-place, and upon the east bank of the river from which it, as well as the surrounding district, Annandale, takes its name. The southernmost point of Scotland, and one of its most inviting portions, Annandale, was honoured by the occupation of those fastidious conquerors who, as Gibbon tells us, turned with contempt from a country of lonely heath and gloomy rock; and one of its hills yet retains deep traces of a Roman camp. In later times, it was held as a fief by

the ancestors of Robert Bruce—and how exposed it was to the incursions of freebooting borderers, the remains of many fortresses still attest. It has, notwithstanding this remote origin and these romantic associations, no recent history; but is a modest little place—visited twice or thrice a day by railway trains; doing a quiet coasting-trade in its own score or two of vessels; supporting one portion of its four thousand people by cotton manufactories, and another portion by taking the salmon which abound at the mouth of its clear broad stream; altogether so like an English town, that one is only reminded he is over the border by reading the great names of Carlyle, Chalmers, Cunningham, and Irving, over the front of many little shops.

Irving's birth.

He who has given a celebrity wide and lasting as English and German literature, to the first of these names, was born in Annandale—that possessor of the last with whom we have to do, was born in the town of Annan, on the 15th of August, 1792, in a house that is still standing, and that any of the older townsfolks will point out to an inquirer; a square, stone-built, 'double-bodied' house, of modest dimensions; hard by the parish church, and what remains of the town cross.

His family.

Edward Irving's paternal ancestors are said to have come, at the distance of a few generations, from France—and his mother was of a family of Louthers, reported to have been descended from Martin Luther, the Reformer. His father was a tanner, and seems to have prospered so well in his

trade as to have bought his dwelling-house, the tanyard opposite, and some neighbouring tenements.

His boyhood and youth.

There were eight children—three sons and five daughters. Edward was the third son, and, though he died at forty-two, survived his father and brothers: his sisters all married in his life-time, and four outlived him. His first teacher was an old dame named Margaret Paine, aunt to the author of the 'Rights of Man,' and the reputed instructress of that 'rebellious needleman' in elementary learning. Edward's schoolmaster was a Mr. Adam Hope, to whose strict discipline, seconded by paternal care, the grateful pupil subsequently ascribed the scholarship which his own disposition would not have led him to acquire, for the boy displayed a greater taste for athletic and daring exercises —for rowing on the Solway Frith, and wandering along its hilly shore—than for the study of school-books. Yet was a significant elevation of manner and choice of pleasures noted in him. He would, even in childhood, seek the companionship of men—loved to haunt the spots consecrated by patriotic or Presbyterian tradition—and was addicted to solitary rambles. The only anecdotes of these his early years that have come down to us, tell of his discovering in a neighbouring farm-house a copy of the 'Ecclesiastical Polity'—a book that seems to have affected his subsequent character and career, as much as did Godwin's 'Political Justice' those of Dr. Chalmers—and of his devoting, a few years later, nearly the whole stock of money with which he had been furnished for a journey

to the purchase of Hooker's works in folio, with some volumes of classical and patristic lore, which, doubtless, he bore away on his head, rejoicing, as did Dr. Robert Vaughan, when, as I remember to have heard him relate, he expended his first guinea on Sir Walter Raleigh's 'History of the World.' Nor did he display an unexceptional aversion to school-learning. For arithmetic—in the study of which he had for companions Clapperton and Dickson, the African travellers, the latter of whom became related to the Irving family by marriage—he showed a decided bias and aptitude. He was sent, in due course, to the University of Edinburgh—happily accessible to all but the poorest of Scottish youths—where, in fulfilment of the promise given by his arithmetical proficiency, he so excelled in mathematics as to attract the attention of Professor Leslie; on whose recommendation he was appointed mathematical teacher in an academy at Haddington—a large agricultural parish of East Lothian—even so early as his seventeenth year. It was about this time Thomas Carlyle and he met. Writing in 'Fraser's Magazine,' January, 1835, Carlyle says, 'The first time I saw Irving was six-and-twenty years ago, in his native town, Annan. He was fresh from Edinburgh, with college prizes [he had taken the degree of 'A.M.'], high character and promise; he had come to see our schoolmaster, who had also been his. We heard of famed professors, of high matters, classical, mathematical—a whole wonderland of knowledge. Nothing but joy, health, hopefulness without end, looked out from the blooming young man.' At eighteen years of age, he

was promoted to a more lucrative and responsible position—the rectorship of an academy at Kirkaldy; a town not much more populous, but far busier, than his native Annan; beautifully situate on the north shore of the Frith of Forth; the town in which Adam Smith was born, and wrote much of his wonderfully potent book. Here he remained seven years. Having previously designed himself for the ministry, he, during this term, completed the probation required by the Church of Scotland,* and became a licentiate. Here, too, he contracted the acquaintance, and fixed the

* How protracted the exercises, and considerable the attainments, exacted by the Kirk from its clerical candidates, is known to so few English readers, that I will transcribe here a passage from Mr. Irving's Sermon on the erection of the Church in Regent Square, in which this peculiarity of Presbyterian discipline is described :—

'In respect to the ministers, this is required of them :—that they should have studied four years, in a university, all the branches of a classical and philosophical education; and either take the rank in literature of Master of Arts, or come out from the university with certificates of their proficiency in the classics, in the mathematics, in logic, and in natural and moral philosophy. They are then, and not till then, permitted to enter upon the study of theology, of which the professors are ordained ministers of the church, chosen to their office. Under separate professors they study theology, Hebrew, and ecclesiastical history, for four years, attending from four to six months in every year. Thus eight years are consumed in study, besides all that was previously taken up at the grammar school and at the academy. They are then set forward upon the world on the recommendation of these professors—to preach? No; they are now taken to severest trials by the presbytery of the Church within those bounds where they reside; and circular letters are sent to all the presbyters in that district, in order that objections may be taken against him who would have the honour, and take upon himself the trust, of preaching Christ. If no objections are offered, they proceed to make trial of his attainments in all things necessary for the ministry; his knowledge, his piety, his learning, and his character. They prescribe to him five several discourses: one, an "Ecce Jesum" in Latin, to discover his knowledge in that language; another, an exercise in Greek criticism, to discover his knowledge in sacred literature; another, an homily; another, a discourse to the clergy, to know his gifts in expounding the Scriptures; another, a sermon, to know his gifts in preaching to the people. These trials last half a year; and being found sufficient, he is permitted to preach the Gospel among the churches. But he is not yet ordained, for our Church ordaineth no man without a flock. The call is submitted to the presbytery; upon which all things being regularly done, they take him to his trials again as at the first, lest anything may have occurred to disqualify him. Then they ordain him over the flock, by laying on of hands, and with strict charges to him and to the people.'

affections, of the lady who afterwards became his wife—Isabella, daughter of the Rev. Mr. Martin.

His person, habits, and attainments.

Let us realize to ourselves what manner of youth he was—this affianced husband of Miss Isabella Martin, rector of a Scottish school, and destined pastor of Scottish kirk. He made so noble, if not pleasing, a figure to the outward eye, that he could not fail to attract the gaze and impress the memory of the passer-by. 'He could never enter a village, but he caught the attention of both old and young.* Labour stood still as he passed—the bucket hung suspended in the middle of the well—the spinning-wheel forgot its round—even chuck-farthing and shuffle-cap themselves stood gaping till he had got out of sight.' He was at least six feet high. All his limbs were well proportioned. Black hair clustered in profusion over his lofty forehead, and descended in untaught curls upon his Herculean shoulders. His eyes, or rather eye—for of one the sight was damaged, and had the appearance known as a squint—was dark, piercing, but soft. His face was of that bi-fold beauty, that, viewed on one side, as some one has said, you had the profile of a brigand, on the other that of a saint. On his lips there sat the firmness of a ruler, and trembled the sensibility of a poet. He was no awkward giant. He was an athlete, as well as a Hercules. He could walk, run, leap, and

* 'Once, when a boy,' said a resident in Annan to the writer, 'I went to Ecclefechan fair with my father; every one was looking at a very tall young man, with a pony. I asked my father who it was, and he said, "Irving, the tanner's son, that's training to be a preacher." The neighbours use to call him Dr. Irving.'

swim, with the best of the 'neabour lads.' He permitted himself no slovenliness in dress, but rather affected the costume of an English clergyman. Nor was he, though a scholar and a divine, an ascetic. He had none of the Phariseeism either of society or of the Church. 'He associated with and lived in the world without restraint,' says an anonymous writer, who may be Allan Cunningham—'joining in the forms and fashions of mixed society, even to what would by some be set down as vulgarity; for he, at one time, was accustomed to smoke his pipe in companies where smoking was introduced.' He was remarkable, at the same time, for blamelessness of life. His morals were held to be untainted, and his conscientiousness both acute and regnant. Though devoted to the pulpit, he had prepared himself for a possible application to the bar, and indeed for any learned profession. He added large classical knowledge to his mathematical excellence, and acquaintance with the modern languages and their literature to both. He also possessed more than the ordinary acquirements in natural philosophy.* Thus, at his entrance on manhood, he 'gave the world assurance of a man,' and was thoroughly furnished for whatever work might be demanded of him by his generation.

But even to this man of high capacity and diligent training, a function did not immediately present itself. Even in the Church, which should be the most perfect of human

Unacceptable as a Preacher.

* In an Ordination Charge, delivered by Mr. Irving at the Scotch Church, London Wall, in March, 1827, he recommends to the young minister the favourite studies of his own youth:—'I invite thee to physiology, which is the science of life in all its forms and conditions; and philology, which is the science of words, the forms of human thought.'

organizations, there is not realized, without delay, the grand requirement of social life—the aim of political science—'to every man a place according to his faculty.' Irving was now nearing the thirtieth year of his age, and no 'call' had come to him from presbytery or patron; or, if from the latter, it had been rejected—for this friendless, struggling man, burning with the consciousness of great, unchallenged powers, had high notions of ministerial independence—and, if from the former, it had not proved effectual to settlement in the parish manse. It seems, in truth, that whenever his preaching gift had been exercised, it was so much to the discontent of the hearers, that he got no second invitation. He was dowered with the double curse of originality and independence—a wayward genius, and an obstinate habit of 'standing on his own instincts.' He had fed his soul with the words of Chrysostom, the Christian Plato—of Jeremy Taylor, the English Chrysostom—and of Hooker, the Bacon of the Church—till he had come to regard, as of mean speech and feeble thought, all living preachers and theologians, with the exception of Chalmers, who had started into favour just as Irving, twelve years his junior, was settling into the pedagogue. He had nurtured his ardent spirit by the companionship of those great churchmen who aspired to rule for Christ, from the altar or the pulpit, in all the provinces of human activity—he had consorted with the shades of Hildebrand and Knox—till he had become of such heroic mood as to disdain the timid bearing of his contemporaries, in the presence of social power and social

problems; and despise the low arts by which, in the Scottish scarce less than in the English Establishment, the clergy obtained preferment. At the same time, the cast of his intellect and the fervour of his patriotism made him averse to secession from the National Church —while the catholicity of spirit engendered by large reading disposed him to the imitation of great examples, the exercise of genial practices, beyond the bounds of his own communion, even to the farthest limits permitted by his creed.

In the spring of 1819, however, Edward Irving left Kirkaldy, determined, thenceforth, to preach the Gospel and live by the Gospel, even though in the discharge of that high and beloved function he should never rise above the office of an evangelist, nor gain a home in the land of his fathers. Called of God to be 'a preacher of righteousness,' preach he would. As his countrymen would not give him audience, he would seek it of the heathen. But even as a missionary, he could not be of the modern pattern. He would dare the hardships, and win the fame, of a Schwartz, a Xavier, and a Henry Martyn. Filled with the spirit of Christian chivalry, and inflamed, perhaps, as so many imaginative minds have been, by visions of Oriental life, his deliberate intention was, relying simply upon such resources as he could open up for himself by the way, to go as a missionary to Persia, after a preliminary wandering over Europe. To qualify himself for this romantic and arduous enterprise, he buried himself more deeply than ever among his books. 'Rejected by the living,'

Resolves on Missionary work.

as he afterwards told a friend, 'I conversed with the dead.' It was at this juncture that he received, one Saturday, an invitation to preach next day for Dr. Andrew Thomson, of Edinburgh. It was intimated, at the same time, that Dr. Chalmers, who was known to be desirous of engaging an assistant minister, would be among the congregation. The sermon, on which, doubtless, great pains of preparation had been bestowed, and trembling anticipation hung, had no immediate result. Days and weeks elapsed without any indication of Irving's having made a favourable impression upon his distinguished auditor. He therefore packed up his books, and despatched them to Annan, while he himself set off on a farewell tour round the coast of Ayrshire. With what a full heart and tear-bedimned eye must he have looked his supposed farewell at the grandly beautiful shores of the Frith of Clyde; the island-studded sea, its every rock the base of some haunted ruin, or the home of some dear legend; the blue hills, adown whose slopes the poetic muse had descended on the cottage of Robert Burns; the fishing villages nestling at their iron-bound feet; Scottish Criffell and English Skiddaw, visible daily from his father's door, and from the window of his own little prophet's chamber! The steamboat into which he stepped from the quay at Greenock was going in another direction, however; and after the paddles had turned, he leaped ashore. Pacing the wharf in disquiet, he resolved to embark in the next boat, wherever she might be going. He did so, and was taken to Belfast. He wandered for two or

Preaches before Dr. Chalmers.

three weeks over the north of Ireland, sleeping in the houses of the peasantry, and seeing Irish life in all its lights and shadows. At Coleraine, he found a letter from his father, enclosing one from Dr. Chalmers, requesting his immediate presence in Glasgow. He arrived there on a Saturday, and found the Doctor gone to Fifeshire. As there was nothing definite in the letter, and several weeks had elapsed since it was written, Irving was on the point of giving up the matter, when Chalmers returned, and told him he desired him for his assistant. 'I am most grateful to you, Sir,' was his reply, 'but I must be also somewhat acceptable to your people. [It has been already intimated that he had a strong aversion to the intrusion of ministers by patronage upon an unwilling people.] I will preach to them if you think fit; but if they bear with my preaching, they will be the first people that have borne with it.' He did preach to the Doctor's people, and was forthwith appointed assistant minister of St. John's, Glasgow.

Is befriended by Dr. Chalmers.

And becomes his Assistant.

CHAPTER II.

THE MAN MADE MANIFEST.

Irving's ministry at Glasgow.

CONTRADICTORY accounts of the degree of acceptance Mr. Irving obtained in the subordinate, though conspicuous sphere of colleague with Dr. Chalmers, have been put on record; from which it may at least be concluded that the congregation were not unanimous in admiration, or even approval. This conclusion we are enabled to verify by the language of his own valedictory discourse, at the close of his three years' ministry —a discourse which probably few of Mr. Irving's English admirers have ever seen; though, as the first of his printed productions, it has an interest beyond that of the occasion on which it was delivered. I have myself only seen it in a manuscript copy.

His farewell discourse.

The copious extracts which I have made from it, and will here introduce, have been selected—as will be all the quoted matter of this volume—either as illustrating Irving's personal or public history and characteristics, or for their merits

of thought and expression. The passages immediately following are rich in all these particulars. They, in the first place, confirm the representation of his utter failure as a preacher, previous to his going to St. John's, and of his attaining there considerable, though not unanimous, acceptance—secondly, cast light both upon the antecedent and subsequent stages of his career; illustrating, by their peculiarities of sentiment and diction, the reasons both of his failure and success—and thirdly, display those admirable qualities of heart which made him ever the more widely beloved as he became more widely known.

Personal acknowledgments.

'This station, which brought us into the ministry of a people wont to listen to the most eloquent of men, we entered upon with a single trust in the providence and grace of God, rather rejoicing in the mighty champion by whose side we were to lift our arm, than mindful of the humiliating contrasts to which we would stand exposed. . . . And that alone which we coveted after, God hath given us—the heart's blessings of the poor, the favour and friendship of many Christians in higher conditions, and the unreserved approbation of your pastor, under whom we laboured. . . . For the congregation, it is almost the first in which our preaching was tolerated, and, therefore, whatever name we may acquire, and whatever good our ministerial labours may turn to, we give to your indulgence of our early and most imperfect endeavours. Take not these for words of compliment to you, as if you had found in us anything worth while; nor for words of congratulation to ourselves, as if you had awarded us any honour.

We know, upon the other hand, that *our imperfections have not been hid from your eyes*, and that they have *alienated some from our ministry*. But still it is our joy and reward that so many have given us a patient and a willing ear; an honour, we say again, to which we were not wont till Providence cast our footsteps hitherward.'

Ministerial integrity.

'Most especially let the youth destined for the holy ministry stand aloof from the unholy influences under which the Church hath fallen; from the seats of power and patronage let them stand aloof; from the boards of ecclesiastical intrigue, on both sides of the Church, let them stand aloof; from glozing the public ear, and pampering the popular taste, with unprofitable, though acceptable matter, let them stand aloof—and while thus dissevered from fawning, intriguing, and pandering, let them draw near to God, and drink inspiration from the milk of his word; and though poor as the first disciples of Christ, without staff, without scrip, still, like the first disciples of Christ, let them labour in the ministry of the word, and in prayer with their families, their kindred, their neighbourhood—the poor, who will welcome them; the sick, who desire them; and the young, who need them—then their Master will find them field enough of usefulness, though the Church should deride such Puritanic youth; and the providence of God will find them in food and raiment, though no patron's eye may deign a look to such friendless youth; and the paradise of God will find them an eternal reward, though the world should cast forth from its fortunate places such heavenly-minded youth. Such a seed

would make the Church once more to be glorious. One such youth, trained amidst Nature's extremities, and Hope's obdurate fastnesses; his soul fed not on patron's promises, nor favour's smiles, but upon the stern resolves and heaven-ward enjoyments of an Apostle's toilsome calling—that youth, I say, were worth a hundred, and a hundred such were worth a host, to raise and quicken this our land, the land, the only land, of a free plebeian Church, which never pined till she began to be patronized.'

'It is our Father in Heaven'—he continues, resuming his personal acknowledgments of personal benefits—'it is our Father in Heaven who hath prospered us beyond our deserving in his Church, and put to flight the foreboding fears which *a mind ill-attuned to the present economy of the Church* conjured up in our path. He hath taken us from the sight of much in our Church that wounded a zealous spirit, but which neither zeal nor wisdom seem able to amend, away to the observation and fellowship of men who are sustaining the interests of religion at home and abroad—to the bosom of a city which is the Mount Zion of the Christian world, whence the law and the testimony are going forth to the ends of the earth.'

'Some' [preachers]—we are presently told, in apology for the speaker's individuality—'are traders from port to port, following the customary and approved course; others adventure over the whole ocean of human concern. The former are hailed by the common voice of the multitude whose course they hold; the latter, blamed as idle, often suspected of hiding deep designs,

always derided as having lost all guess of the proper course. Yet of the latter class of preachers was Paul the Apostle, who took lessons of none of his brethren, when he went up to Jerusalem; of the same class was Luther the Reformer, who asked counsel of nothing but his Bible, and addressed him single-handed to all the exigents of his time; of the same class was Calvin, the most lion-hearted of Churchmen, whose independent thinking hath made him a name to live, and hath given birth to valuable systems both of doctrine and polity. Therefore, such adventurers, with the Bible as their chart, and the necessities of their age as the ocean to be explored and brought under the authority of Christ, are not to be despised, because they are single-handed and solitary, by the multitude of useful men who wait upon those portions which some former adventurers have already brought into the vineyard. And long let this audience, which listens to the voice of a pastor who, without sacrificing the Gospel of Christ, hath diverged further than any of his age from the approved course of preaching, and launched a bold adventure of his own into the ocean of religious speculation, bringing off prouder triumphs to his Redeemer than any ancient pilot of them all—long may this, the people of his pasture, give countenance to those in whom they discern a spirit from the Lord, and a zeal for his honour, however much they may hold of ancient and venerable landmarks, which, though they might well define the course proper to a former generation, may be quite unsuitable to the necessities of the present. Such adventurers, under God, this age of the world seems to us especially

Ministerial originality.

to want. There are ministers enow to hold the flock in pasture and in safety. But where are they to make inroads upon the alien, to bring in the votaries of fashion, of literature, of sentiment, of policy, and of rank, who are content, in their several idolatries, to do without piety to God, and love to Him whom He hath sent? Where are they to lift up their voice against simony, and arts of policy, and servile dependence upon the great ones of this earth, and shameful seeking of ease and pleasure, and anxious amassing of money, and the whole cohort of evil customs which are overspreading of the Church? Truly, it is not stagers who take on the customary form of their office, and go the beaten round of duty, and then lie down content; but it is daring adventurers, who shall eye from the grand eminence of a holy and heavenly mind all the grievances which religion underlays, and all the obstacles which stay her course, and then descend, with the self-denial and the faith of an Apostle, to set the battle in array against them all.

'Fear not, brethren, that many will be so bold, or that the body of good custom will break up and give place to wild rovings and huntings after novelty. Against this you are secured by the strongest desire of the youthful mind, the desire of pleasing the greater number; by the rewards which lie all upon the side of conformity, and by the risk and ridicule which lie all upon the side of adventure. The danger is of too much sameness of the style and method, not of too little. The multitude of preachers will plod the beaten track, and weary you with the same succession of objects and

Securities against its excess.

views, constantly presenting the same aspect of things to the same faculties of the mind—and if you would have the relief of freshness and novelty, no less necessary for the entertainment of the spiritual than of the natural eye—if you would have religion made *as broad as thought and experience*—then you must not discourage, but bear patiently with, and hear to an end, any one who takes his natural liberty to expatiate over all the applications of the word of God to the wants of men; bringing him to no bar of favourite preachers, but to the bar of your own religious feelings and experience alone.

'Thus we plead and exhort, not in defence of ourselves, though it is well known to you we have taken such freedom, but in behalf of our brotherhood, and of the ancient liberty of prophesying, against those narrow prescriptive tastes, bred not of knowledge, nor derived from the better days of the Church, but in the conventicle bred; and fitted, perhaps, for keeping together a school of Christians, but totally unfit for the wide necessities of the world (else why this alienation of the influential of the world from the cause?). We are pleading against those Shibboleths of a sect, those forms of words, which now do not feed the soul with understanding, but are, in truth, as the time-worn and bare trunks of those trees from which the Church was formerly nourished, and which now have in them neither sap nor nourishment. We are pleading for *a more natural style of preaching*, in which the various moral and religious wants of men shall be met, artlessly met, with the simple truths of revelation,

Naturalness in preaching.

delivered as ultimate facts not to be reasoned on, and expressed as Scripture expresses them—which conjunction being made, and crowned with prayer for the divine blessing, the preacher has fulfilled the true spirit of his office.

'This certainly is what we have aimed at. It hath led us to be suspected, it hath led us to be stigmatised by the timorous slaves of customary men and customary preaching; but ye, nevertheless, have borne with us, for which we now tender you our hearty thanks. Ye have borne the free utterance of all our thoughts upon all subjects that came under our ministration; thereby affording us *the highest treat of a thinking, and the dearest right of a conscientious man*. . . . Ye have advanced us from the condition of an unknown stranger, to be your guest, your friend, your confidant in things spiritual and temporal. Kindly counsel ye have given us often, but rebukes never. An unfriendly word has not passed between us and any mortal of the hundreds now before us. We have not one known enemy in a congregation from which we have gathered a large accession to our friends. . . . Your indulgence hath restored me to the confidence of myself, which had begun to fail under the *unsanctioning coldness of the priesthood* [exquisitely accurate expression of the cruel taciturnity which the clerical order have most effectually opposed to human progress!]—restored me to the Church, from which despair of being serviceable had well-nigh weaned me—and restored my affection to this holy vocation, which I shall labour to fulfil, and by God's grace to magnify.'

The fruits of its indulgence.

It was during his ministry at Glasgow that Dr.

Chalmers made that practical experiment in ecclesiastical and political economy, for the opportunity of making which he had sighed in vain at Kilmany, great as was his influence there. The population of St. John's parish exceeded ten thousand, and the yearly amount raised by assessment for the relief of the poor, averaged about one thousand five hundred pounds. He did not shrink, however, from putting in operation the system previously conceived, and long subsequently advocated in his Lectures on Political Economy; namely, the substitution of congregational collections for a compulsory rate, and its distribution by a regular method of pastoral or diaconal visitation from house to house. The complete and striking success of this experiment, is one of the most brilliant and suggestive facts of Chalmers's career, and will have to be considered when the Church sets about the systematic fulfilment of her social function. What part Mr. Irving bore in its conduct, how much he contributed to its success, how hearty was his agreement with its illustrious author, may be judged from the amplified references to it in his farewell address :—

Chalmers's parochial polity.

'Oh! how my heart rejoices to recur to the hours I have sitten under the roofs of the people, and been made a partaker of their confidence, and a witness of the hardships they had to endure. In the scantiest, and, perhaps, worst time with which this manufacturing city hath ever been pressed, it was my almost daily habit to make a round of their families, and uphold, what in me lay, the declining cause of God. There

Visits to the poor.

have I sitten, with little silver or gold of my own to bestow, with little command over the charity of others, and heard the various narrations of hardships—narrations uttered for the most part with modesty and patience, oftener drawn forth with difficulty than obtruded on your ear—their wants, their misfortunes, their ill-requited labour, their hopes vanishing, their families dispersing in search of better habitations, the Scottish economy of their homes giving way before encroaching necessity, debt rather than saving their condition, bread and water their scanty fare, hard and ungrateful labour the portion of their house. All this have I often seen and listened to within naked walls; the witness, oft the partaker, of their miserable cheer, with little or no means to relieve. Yet, be it known, to the glory of God, and the credit of the poor, and the encouragement of tender-hearted Christians, that such application to the heart's ailments is there in our religion, and such a hold in its promises, and such a pith of endurance in its noble examples, that when set forth by our inexperienced tongue, with soft words and kindly tones, they did never fail to drain the heart of the sourness that calamity engenders, and sweeten it with the balm of resignation, often enlarge it with cheerful hope, sometimes swell it high with the rejoicings of a Christian triumph. The manly tear which I have seen start into the eye of many an aged sire, whose wrinkled brow and lyart locks deserved a better fate, as he looked to the fell conclusion of an ill-provided house, an ill-educated family, and a declining religion, which hemmed him in at a time when his hand was growing feeble for work,

and the twilight of age setting in upon his soul—that tear is dearer to my remembrance than the tear of sentiment that swims in the eye of beauty at a tale of distress—yea, it is dear as the tear of liberty which the patriot sheds over his fallen country; and the blessings of the aged widow, bereft of her children, and sitting in her lonely cabin, the live-long day, at her humble occupation—her blessings, when my form darkening her threshhold drew her eye—the story of her youth, of her husband, of her family, wed away from her presence—her patient trust in God, and holy faith in Christ—with the deep response of her sighs, when I sought God's blessing upon the widow's cruse and the widow's barrel, and that he would be the husband of her widowhood, and the father of her children in their several habitations—these, so oft my engagements, shall be *hallowed tokens for memory to flee to*, and *sacred materials for fancy to work with*, while the heart doth beat within my breast. God alone doth know my destiny—but though it were to minister in the halls of nobles, and the courts and palaces of kings, he can never find for me more natural welcome, more kindly entertainment, and more refined enjoyment, than he hath honoured me with in this suburb parish of a manufacturing city. My theology was never at fault around the fires of the poor, my manner never misinterpreted, my good intentions never mistaken. Churchmen and Dissenters, Catholics and Protestants, received me with equal graciousness. Here was the popularity worth the having—whose evidences are not in noise, ostentation, and numbers; but in the

heart opened and disburdened, in the cordial welcome of your poorest exhortations, in the spirit blessed by your most unworthy prayer—in the flowing tear, the confided secret, the parting grasp, and the long, long entreaty to return. Of this popularity *I am* covetous, and God in his goodness hath granted it in abundance, with which I desire to be content. They who will visit the poor shall find the poor worthy to be visited—they who will take an interest, not as patrons, but as fellow-men, in the condition of the poor, shall not only confer, but inherit, a blessing. 'Tis the finest office of religion to visit the widows, and the fatherless, and those who have no helper—so secret, so modest, so tender-hearted; most like it is to God's providence itself, so noiseless and unseen, and effectual. . . . Would that in this age, when our clergy and our laity are ever and anon assembling in public to take measures for the moral and religious welfare of men, they were found as diligently occupying this more retired, more scriptural, and more natural region! Would they were as instant for the poor, the irreligious, the unprotected of their several parishes and several neighbourhoods, as they are for the tribes whose dwellings are remote, and whose tongue is strange!'

A graphic picture of capitular appliances and non-performance follows; and to that suceeeds its contrasted counterpart,—'the one priest, to attend the cure of many thousands, with what voluntary help he can draw from the flock itself.'

'Yet such is still the vigour of our religious institu-

tions, when wrought with the spirit of Christ, and such the willingness and practical wisdom of our people, when properly called out, that our single parish hath been surrounded by pious, intelligent, and industrious men, unhired with money, unpaid with official honours, deriving nothing but trouble, and consuming nothing but their means and their more precious time; who do a Christian father's office to the children, a brother's office to the poor, a friendly office unto all—stirring and stimulating the lethargic spirit of religion, forcing vice from its concealments, or overawing it with their observation; making the Sabbath orderly in the day season, and in the evening rejoicing every street with the voice of children hymning their Maker's praise. There is not a child who need grow ignorant of its duties to God and man, for spiritual instruction comes beseeching to every door. There is not a misfortune which may not find a comforter, nor a case of real need which may not find a seasonable relief, nor a perplexity which may not be met with religious counsel. These things are not to seek, they are ready at hand, and served not out of constraint, but out of a willing mind. And while Nature's ailments are thus healed by ministering hands, and the poor of God's house fed in time of need, the spirit is not debased by sense of dependence, nor broken by insolence of office. There are no official visits of inquisition, nor speeches of hard authority. Everything cometh forth of Christian willingness, and is tender as Nature's feelings, and soft as the administration of mercy, which droppeth unseen upon the pining

A model parish.

spirit, like the dew from heaven upon the parched earth. Such another institution as this parish hath, for raising the tone of virtue and religion among you, I am bold to say the Church, perhaps the world, doth not contain.'

Disclaiming for himself the merit of being one of these pastoral helpers, he thus expresses his lofty estimate of their labours, and of the result of their universal imitation:—

'To me they seem no other than a forlorn hope, mustered under a valorous, cautious, and enthusiastic leader, who have volunteered out of the army of Christ to go against the strongest hold of the enemy, and regain for the Church the precious position she hath lost in the crowded cities of our land. Their success hath approved their valour and their skill. Other bands have started, in other quarters, against this, the most rugged front of depravity and vice. And, as hath been already said, if churchmen would become once more the shepherds of the people, not petty politicians, or pitiful dependents upon the great—would they stand for themselves upon the basis of their sacred function, and become God's royal nation, Christ's ambassadors, and the captains of the militant church—then would health spring up in darkness, and the cities now famous for disaffection, and branded with sedition, would become the nurseries of new devices for the good of Church and State.'

After a few sentences invoking the people's appreciation of their pastor, and assuring them of the preacher's grateful recollection of both him and them, he sums up his personal acknowledgments in these fervid words:—

'In fine, then, this is the burden of my obligations to my God. He has given me the fellowship of a man mighty in his Church, an approving congregation of his people, the attachment of a populous corner of his vineyard. I ask no more of heaven for the future, but to grant me the continuance of the portion which, by the space of three years, I have here enjoyed. But this I need not expect. Never shall I again find another man of transcendent genius whom I can love as much as I admire—into whose house I can go in and out like a son—whom I can revere as a father, and serve with the devotion of a child—never shall I find another hundred consociated men of piety, and by free-will consociated, whose every sentiment I can adopt, and whose every scheme I can find delight to second. And I feel I shall never find another parish of ten thousand, into every house of which I was welcomed as a friend, and solicited back as a brother.'

Mutual recollections.

How he remembered Scotia, and Glasgow in especial —the natural and moral beauties of the land that gave him birth—her scenery and sabbaths—the pastor and the people that were the womb of his public life—the church whose devotion, and the populace whose necessities, shaped and quickened his strong conception of the priestly office—how his heart and fancy kept the remarkable promise of his lips, we shall see in due time. Here, it should be registered, that Glasgow did not forget *him*; that by the poor in particular his memory was long cherished; and that even to this day he may be heard of with reverence and regret in the wynds

and closes of that great and terrible city, whose religion is so ostentatious, and whose wretchedness is so desperate.

Thus was made manifest, tardily but decisively—on a conspicuous stage, and to a fit audience—a man whom nature had furnished with richest qualities of body, intellect, and spirit; whom the lofty beauty of western Caledonian scenery had aided her admirable seminaries, and her pious homes, in modelling on the highest patterns of human character; but whom 'the coldness of an unsanctioning priesthood,' and the obtuseness of plebeian perception, had conspired long to imprison in obscurity and tempt to flight into open space. And it was with these feelings of mingled exultation and distress—with proud eagerness for conflict with old foes under new forms, but a sigh of tenderness for forsaken friends—that he turned his face towards this London, which every provincial aspirant expects to make, as did Johnson and Burke, a pedestal of greatness; but how many find, like Savage and Chatterton, a pillory and a grave!

CHAPTER III.

THE PREACHER.

It would scarcely have been conjectured, from the above-given passages of his Farewell Discourse to the congregation of St. John's, that Mr. Irving's position among them was so little satisfactory to himself as to cause the revival of his missionary project; nor can I discover any hint of such a circumstance in the portions I have not copied. Nevertheless, we have it under his own hand; and it is stated by one of his memorialists, that he was hardly dissuaded from going as a missionary to Jamaica. Dedicating a volume of sermons,* some six years afterwards, to the members of his London congregation, he thus alludes to his invitation to the ministry of the almost deserted Caledonian Church, Cross Street, Hatton Garden:—'The Caledonian Church had been placed under the pastoral care of two worthy ministers, who were successively called to parochial charges in the

Invitation to London.

*'The Last Days; a Discourse,' &c.

Church of Scotland; and by their removal, and for want of a stated ministry, it was reduced to great and almost hopeless straits. But faith hopeth against hope, and when it does so, never faileth to be rewarded. This was proved in the case of those two men whose names I have singled out from your number to give them that honour to which they are entitled in the face of the congregation. Having heard through a friend of theirs, and now also of mine, but at that time unknown to me, of my unworthy labours in Glasgow, as assistant to the Rev. Dr. Chalmers, they commissioned him to speak to me concerning their vacant church, and not to hide from me its present distress. Well do I remember the morning when, as I sat in my lonely apartment, *meditating the uncertainty of a preacher's calling, and revolving in my mind purposes of missionary work*, this stranger stepped in upon my musing, and opened to me the commission with which he had been charged.'

It was on the day before the Christmas of 1821 that Edward Irving came up to this city 'to make trial and proof of my gifts before the remnant of the congregation which still held together.' The chapel was in connexion with an institution called the Caledonian Asylum, and enjoyed a small parliamentary grant, as a portion of the preacher's stipend. But it was a condition of this endowment that the minister be able to preach in the Gaelic—for the benefit, we may suppose, of the few gillies plying as porters in London streets, who retained their native speech. Irving proposed, in his impetuous way, as he was about to return to Glasgow,

Probation.

to acquire the language where it yet flourished as a vernacular. 'Such was the steadiness of purpose with which I desired to preach the Gospel in London, and to be your Pastor'—he writes in the Dedication—'that this impediment cost me not a thought, and I resolved, forthwith, to domesticate myself in the Highlands, and master their ancient tongue.' But the Duke of York, as President of the Asylum, had heard the preacher during his probation; and by his influence, it appears, the obsolete condition was dispensed with. Another difficulty, arising from the requirement of the Church of Scotland, previous to ordination, that there be a sufficient provision for the preacher's maintenance, was got over by a special effort of 'the men of Caledonia resident in London, possessing wealth and influence;' to as many as five hundred of whom the 'triers' sent a circular, communicating their belief that the Lord had sent them a time of revival by the hand of this unknown and oft-rejected man. Mr. Irving was then duly ordained in Annan parish church—the church in which he was baptized—and his first act, as an ordained minister, was the administration of the Lord's Supper to Dr. Chalmers's parish flock, which he records as 'a singular honour.'*

Settlement.

It was on the second Sunday of July, 1822, that Mr. Irving entered on his new ministry. 'For one year, or nearly so,' he writes, in the Dedication above quoted, 'our union went on cementing itself by mutual acts of kindness, in the shade of that happy obscurity

* The Dedication to 'The Last Days.'

which we then enjoyed . . . the noisy tongues of men, nor their envious eyes, were not upon us.' Either his recollection or his consciousness, however, must have been strangely unlike other men's, when he thus wrote; for it is certain, that, within a few months of his settlement, his preaching had created a quite unprecedented sensation—described by an unfriendly, and sometimes insolent reviewer, as 'one of the most extraordinary and extensive infatuations that ever seized upon a community calling itself intelligent.'* In the first quarter, it is recorded, the seat-holders at the Caledonian Asylum chapel had increased from fifty to fifteen hundred. A little later, and the rank and intellect of the land were crowding there Sunday after Sunday. The occasional sermons in London of Robert Hall, or Dr. Chalmers, did not attract the crowds which now pressed to Edward Irving's weekly services. The Duke of York repeated his visit, and carried with him other members of the royal family. Brougham took Mackintosh, and Mackintosh, by repeating at a dinner-table a beautiful sentence he had heard from Irving in prayer, drew Canning.† The parliamentary leaders of both sides, and even the Tory premier, Lord Liverpool (much to Lord Eldon's horror)—the judges, and barristers of every degree—fashionable physicians and medical students—duchesses, noted beauties, city madams—clerics and dissenters—with men and women who rather followed the fashion than made particular

Extraordinary Popularity.

* Mr. W. Fleming's 'Life of Mr. Irving,' published in 1823.

† Life of Mackintosh, vol. ii, p. 478.

pretensions to either intellect or religion—besieged the doors, and were jammed together in the aisles. Carriage panels were cracked in Cross-street as in Drury-lane, and the preacher was every whit as much the rage as ever Kemble or Kean. It was found necessary, for the prevention of accidents, to admit the seat-holders by a side door, and to limit the miscellaneous attendance by the issue of tickets, for which application was made by letter during the week. Even then, the preacher had to make his way up pulpit-stairs covered with ladies, glad to obtain that rude accommodation.

Division of public opinion.

This extraordinary popularity did not denote unanimity of admiration. Never was opinion more divided on the merits of a public character. And, as usually happens, on the points most open to observation, the controversy was hottest. By some, meanness of understanding, ugliness of person, and hideous gesticulation, were imputed to the man in whom others saw a marvel of intellect, a most imposing presence, and the utmost naturalness of action. The powerfulness of his speech none could deny; but it was attributed by hostile critics to the vulgarest qualities. As it is not the custom to print opinions on a preacher until himself appeals to the judgment, by seeking the aid, of the press—criticism was for some time only colloquial; but the fierceness of the paper war that flamed out immediately on Mr. Irving's appearance as an author confirms the recollection of contemporaries as to the diversity of opinion excited by the preacher.

'What went' the people 'out for to see?' It is to be regretted, that only scanty materials exist for the formation of a more exact judgment of the preacher, than can be fairly based on the extraordinary series of discourses delivered in the winter of 1822-3, to the description of which, and their reception, we must devote a separate and considerable space. That useful, if not perfectly legitimate, publication, 'The Pulpit,' was not commenced till April, 1823; and though Mr. Irving is frequently reported in its earlier numbers, it is usually but in abstract. Mr. Irving himself seems to have printed none of his ordinary discourses. Only a volume of 'Thirty Sermons, by the Rev. E. Irving, A.M., preached during the first three years of his residence in London; from the accurate notes of Mr. T. Oxford, short-hand writer,' is of use for our present purpose. But with that in our hand, we may reply to the question we have asked—not, certainly, 'a man clothed with soft raiment'—anything but a court chaplain, or modern fashionable preacher. Never were the pretensions of rank more ruthlessly spurned—never the vices of the rich more sternly denounced—never the independence of the preacher's office more bravely vindicated—than by Edward Irving, when princes of the blood, and princes of the mart, swelled his audience. Nor did the aristocracy of intellect, or of the Church, find, in him, a flatterer. Statesmen and ecclesiastics were subjected, in the presence of the common people, to comparisons with the patriots and saints of old, much to the dis paragement of the moderns. The literature of the day

'Thirty Sermons.' The preacher's general characteristics.

was characterized from the pulpit with a freedom that shocked the punctilios of the religious, and offended the tastes of the reading laity. Every grade of society was passed in review, and its moral estate graphically portrayed. It is not to be denied that the preacher sometimes erred, as nearly all revivalists and reformers have done, in undue depreciation of his own times; but there was nothing of bitterness, whatever of gloom, in his compositions. The satirist may 'draw' for a while, his readers or hearers enduring the castigation of their own vices for the pleasure of seeing their neighbours' scourged. But censorship is not an abiding power. The secret of Irving's attraction lay in the tenderness with which he bound up the wounds of poor humanity, rather than in the skill with which he probed them. None had ever a deeper sympathy with the sorrows and degradations of his kind,—none a kindlier compassion for their frailties. Though it pleased the witlings of the age to paint him as a dealer-out of damnation, there is little in what remains of his discourses to justify the representation. The Fatherhood of God, and the filial goings-forth of the human heart, were his most frequent themes — the parables and miracles of Christ, his abounding inspiration. His usual tone was that of remonstrance; and when he threatened, it was with terrors which he traced to the sinner's own bosom. He spoke of disquietudes rather than of transgressions, and mourned over the condition of men, while others vituperated their nature.

The reader will have been prepared, from the 'Farewell Discourse' of the Glasgow assistant preacher, to find

the London pastor using an independent and unusual tone of pulpit address—discoursing of duty rather than of belief; urging on men repentance of the things condemned by their own law, rather than arguing to them on the refinements of theology; and that he would boldly vindicate this use of the 'liberty of prophesying.' Accordingly, we have, among the first of the 'Thirty Sermons,' several on the Mission of John the Baptist; we read in them addresses to every class of mind and people; and we come, on an early page, to this passage of self-defence :—

'Christian liberty has indeed fallen into bondage. You must shape your discourses by the schools of Geneva or Holland. If you come home and seek into every heart—if you touch the souls of the several ranks before which you stand, paying the tribute of your counsel to the rich as well as poor—to religious, as well as irreligious—to noble statesmen, princes, and kings, as well as mechanics, tradesmen, and merchants—then you are suspected as some dangerous one, some radical disseminator of discontent. Now, in the name of the Gospel, is it come to this, that when we address a class of men, we should do them an injury? Are our counsels evil things, that they must be scrutinized by such thoughts? Are our rebukes innovations, that they should be so watched? I can, for one, think more highly of my office. I think it a favour to tell a man of his sins. The more I do it, the more I deserve his thanks. It is my office to love all, and to preach to all; which were a common thing unless I preached repentance. Oh! when I look at Paul, and see him

The bondage of pulpit custom.

commencing that high discourse before the elders, which they soon interrupted, it being unsavoury; when I see him before benches of kings, preaching to them—of what?—of "righteousness" in governing the people—of "temperance" in their royal pleasures—of "judgment to come," when their judgment was to be judged; and when I see him by the sea-side, melting, with a farewell discourse, his hearers into lamentations and tears; and when I see him pleading for his life in the midst of a stormy and popular assembly—it seems to me that, of the many ancient arts which are lost to us, the art of apostolic preaching is one.'

With this quaint freedom, and particularity of admonition, he addresses 'those who are occupied in the world of fashion and gaiety.' 'You have a station of great trust committed to your watching—you have the wardenship of the forms of high life, which soon disseminate themselves through the whole country. Into your parties and assemblies, admit those only, men as well as women, who are unblemished by any known crime; or keep them at a distance till, by penitence, they have made atonement to wounded virtue, and then admit them with a mark of observation. Let your parties be graced with truth; let them be recreated by innocent amusement. Vain and empty youths, who care only for their attire, dismiss; and likewise the aged who affect the liberties and joyous colours of youth. Reprove, too, wits who make merry with grave and serious things, and take the name of God profanely on their lips—dismiss these. Dawdlers and mere lookers-on,

Admonition to the world of fashion.

and flippant fools—also all the insect tribe, which fly round about; and all the reptile tribe, who bow the knee to greatness—away, away with them to schools of wisdom, where they may learn to fill their simple heads with knowledge. Sunday parties follow at your peril: give your servants rest, and shew them an example of holiness: take them to the house of God, and, like your ancestors, set yourselves at their head. Make such customs fashionable, and God will enrich you evermore.'

In a sermon preached some time subsequently, and in a season of great national distress, the degenerate relations of the higher to the lower classes is dwelt upon with terrible emphasis. Noblemen, and men of ancient family—gentlemen, possessed of the land under God—whom their country has honoured and enriched, because of their fathers' worthy services to the state—are reminded that their pure escutcheons, their heraldic rights, their armorial bearings, their sacred mottoes—'which always have in them a touch of the reverence of God, of faith and good conduct'—do all declare that they hold nothing in their own right; that as kings are stewards of *power* under Christ, they, also, are stewards of the *land*, and therefore are rightly charged with the reward of industry, and the prevention of wickedness, the protection of orphans, the relief of the distressed, the education of the ignorant, the provision of religious instruction for all. 'But, alas! how hath it come to pass with this unbelieving, degenerate generation, who have converted all these divine trusts and obligations into merchandize, and bartered them for money. So

Neglected duties of the landed aristocracy.

that from between landlord and tenant the ancient baronial feeling, on the one hand, and the ancient reverential feeling, on the other, hath almost vanished, for the handfast and fist-clenched certainty of a money bargain; where interest, on the one hand, grapples interest on the other, and affection is slain in the sharp contention. The Church is beginning to be grudged her right, and murmureth against her oppressors. The master hireth his servants at the least possible price, and the servant serveth his master with the least possible service. Money is the price of all obligations; the quit-rent of all affection and relationship. . . I declare unto you, that a man or a woman is not a thing to be bought for money, and his services to be paid with money; not a slave by the week, nor a tool hired by the month; but he is a person, an immortal soul, redeemed by Christ, and by Christ upheld in his powers, mental and bodily. And if you regard him in any lower light, you do dishonour to God, in whose image he is created, and for whose glory he is sent to administer affairs upon the earth. The land is not yours, but "the land is mine," saith the Lord of Hosts. And every one that dwelleth upon it is of your estate, given to you from God; and you ought to have a kindly eye toward him, and he ought to have a respectful eye toward you; even as every one who dwelleth in our house is of our household, and hath a right to all the spiritual privileges thereof.

'But the great men are grown vain and ambitious, heedless of all these things, luxurious and profuse; and count it more honour (shame that I should have to say it in England) to shine on the great parade, or to figure

at a levee, or to be trumpeted abroad by a morning newspaper, or to riot in the night-season at balls, routs, and assemblies, than to sustain the character of the fathers of the people, the friends of the oppressed, the patrons of the deserving, examples of piety, ministers of justice and equity, and stewards of God within that province committed to their trust.'

Merchants, traders, and money people—the possessors of capital for the employ of what they call the 'operative classes'—are next informed that the wealth which they have accumulated by the labour of hundreds or thousands, from all obligation to whom the employer 'considers himself to be free when he has paid them on Saturday night,' doth bear obligations analogous to those of hereditary wealth. A joint-stock company, it is said, with a graphic truthfulness soon to be demonstrated by the experience of devastation, is 'a rope of sand, a rock to wreck on, a quicksand to engulph goods in.' The avarice induced by prosperous commerce is declared to be the root of all social evil. 'Competency satisfies no man. Every man must have a fortune, must distinguish himself, must make himself a family. The merchant must dwell beside the lord, and the tradesman must have his villa beside the squire. It is a race for gain, a scramble for gold; and, as you cannot serve God and Mammon, it is the forsaking of God, . . the worshipping the basest spirit which fell from heaven. The manufacturer is bound to look with care and concern upon the people who labour for him, and upon their children. He is bound to guard them against extravagance in good times, and then they shall

Obligations and capabilities of employers.

be provided against want in bad times. It is his part to look after the comfort of their habitations (not the cleanliness of his factory alone), the instruction of their children, and the spiritual health of them all. Oh what a man, what a noble man, the manufacturer might be! the owner, not of fields of the earth, or of trees of the wood, but the master of ingenious men, of hundreds of most ingenious men, who would all render him their love if he would ask it. Such manufacturers were David Dale,* and others, whose names I do not mention, as being of your own time. It were very easy for any manufacturer, in whom the fear of God dwelleth, to earn to himself a crown of glory both in this world and in the world to come, and to be almost adored by the people. But how hath it become? In *good* times, beating up for workmen by beat of drum, and advertising them to come from distant parts, and immediately in *bad* times, paying them off to starve, if the parish will not maintain them. In good times, allowing them to drink, to live in concubinage, to profane the Sabbath, to blaspheme the Lord, to educate their children in infidelity, and club together for all manner of political disaffection—then, in bad times, turning them over to their unreclaimed wills, ferocious passions, revenge, and violent acts; to be repressed only by the sword. That is the way of it. It begins in the adoration of gold—and it ends in the mediation of steel. Gold, the god—the sword, the mediator. That is the religion of Mammon—a hell on earth, the consummation.

* Of Lanark, the father-in-law of Robert Dale Owen.

Oh, it is a system such as the world hath never yet seen; and it crieth toward heaven for vengeance. It has been Mammon's sowing time for half a century; his harvest is ripe, and his jubilee is at hand. Woe, woe, woe, when he putteth in the sickle! For your money-lenders and capitalists (who are the lords of this new creation of political economy) are bringing things to the crisis of old Rome, when the people, who bore the burthens of the state in peace and war, were wont to retire to the Aventine hill, or to dissolve the community altogether; when the commonwealth went on plunging through peace and war, under the government of tribunes of the people, until it ended in the triumvirates, who proscribed and slaughtered the best blood of Rome. They are hasting and longing to work out of our ancient Christian system of the state the fine web of moral principle, all suspended from the fear of God and the obedience of Christ. They are hasting and longing to work out all obligation of man to man; all sense of reciprocal duty; all the dignity, and grace, and obligation of office; all the grace, and goodliness, and glory of life; and to reduce everything to the increase of money, the accumulation of wealth; which, from the Commons' House of St. Stephen's, in the West, to the Exchange, in the East, is the great subject of conversation, the great cause of despatches and expresses from nation to nation, the sinews of power, the great end of combination, and, I may say, the answer to the first question in our Catechism, "What is man's chief end?"—"Man's chief end is to glorify Mammon, and to enjoy him while he can."'

Political Economy and Christian morals.

The result of this substitution of private selfishness, for public spirit, he shows in the decay of patriotism and the dissolution of social ties —the people become like 'sheep without a shepherd,' men without a country—the golden cords which did encircle the fasces of the state untwined, and hardly able to hold together the rods, the several orders; the lower classes clubbing their strength and wits against those of the upper, or else dispirited, broken-hearted, helpless, and miserable.

Decay of patriotism and of social ties.

In another discourse, immediately following, on the 'sins of the common people,' is noticed, as a mark of national decline, the universal disrespect of public officers and dignitaries. The principle of obedience, for conscience sake—the preacher complains—hath no longer any being, as a general principle. Reverence for men in authority is departed; the venerable insignia of office are despised as foolish baubles; every act is looked upon with suspicion, and censured unsparingly. A public man is considered a sort of fair game for every shaft of scandal and malice. 'The community labour, when they can, to make their servants, as they call them (but they are not their servants—they are God's servants), the worst possible, by not giving them a dog's life in the house; yea, indeed, no thievish dog is so suspected in the kitchen as any ruler, or officer, or magistrate, is suspected in the great chamber of public opinion.'

Unfair distrust of public men.

As another mark of decay, is noted the mendicant spirit of the country people, which is attributed as well to the neglect of the clergy as of the landed proprietors. The

Clerical neglect and peasant pauperism.

former are incidentally described as the 'lineal children of the cowled monks of other days;' the successors of 'the shaven friars who, with satchel on back and bare of foot, were wont to gather honey from every bee-hive, which they might fatten upon and consume.' The condition of the peasantry is depicted in a sentence which has not yet lost *all* its terrible truthfulness:—'Early and imprudent marriages, often originating in concubinage; the desire of children, oft stimulated by the parish allowance; a family brought up for pauperism, and not ashamed of it—clinging immoveably to their parishes, like limpets to their rock; having no idea beyond eating and drinking, and labouring the soil, and enjoying the freedom of the alehouse. Oh! what an abomination in the sight of the Lord; what an indignation in the sight of Christ, who hath established his church for the remedy of ignorance, the mother of all these abominations!'

That Irving did thus recognize and discharge—with mingled severity and tenderness; with no less philosophical penetration into causes than manly indignation at results—that generally forgotten function of the Christian ministry, social censorship, goes far to account for his unparalleled power of attraction and influence; for ailing men, though but vaguely conscious of their maladies, and not in earnest about their cure, will delight in having them described. But it was not the right of *social* censorship alone which he asserted. Faithful to the promise of his Glasgow discourse, he publicly lamented over the degeneracy of religious men, in doctrine and spirit; rebuked their preference of expediency to duty; and set forth anew the ancient examples

of religious manhood. In one of his earliest London discourses—one of the several on the Mission of John the Baptist—he exclaims, 'Think not that I love the office of admonition! I love it not; but I hate it not, and I will not flee from it when our Evangelist presents occasion. Oh! I would make these lectures, by the grace of God, as broad as the sea of truth; whose expansion, this age having neglected, hath run itself into narrows and creeks of the ocean of religion, instead of keeping the high sea.' And he instances the desuetude of a vigorous theology as a cause of the general hostility of intellectual men, and of popular literature, to religion:—

Degeneracy of religious doctrine and literature.

'Truly, my brethren, it is not my wish to excite your indignation; but when I see the rejection of Calvinism, the solid faith which this age takes for necessity, or fatalism; and when I see the reception of meagre Arminianism, and the discountenance of the strong manly discourses of our fathers—when I take these into account, it seems to me, that there is at bottom a successful position maintained against vital religion, and that the world is as full of animosity as ever to the cause of our Saviour. When I reflect, and cast an eye on the power of popular feeling, to observe whether I have spoken amiss—why, the conviction is, in me, that I am not up to the mark. The best index of the esteem in which the world holds Christ and his doctrines, will be found to be this—the printed and popular books which are, as it were, the records of the common mind. Now, if you will compare the thought, which is at present expended in

the service of Christ, with that which was wont to be so expended in former times, you will find it to be decreased both in quantity and quality. There are not such men now in the land as there were wont to be, girded about with the girdle of truth. Why, if you want a powerful illustration against the infidel—if you seek any divine contemplation—you have to go back for it several ages, and draw it forth from the men who, though dead, do live in their noble works. The men of Christ are driven in on their position; they make no onset on the enemy. Content to be molested, they allow the science, and literature, and poetry of the age, to take their own course, and depart from God into all error. Perhaps, *they give them names, curse them, and are content.* They wait the expectation of a second Pentecost: they pray for the operations of the Spirit, and form societies, but do little else. But they ought to think, to reason, and to rouse up their manhood: they ought to awaken the gift that is in them; to be grave and expeditious in the warfare of the soul (for souls are daily lost): and so they ought to serve God in their noblest capacity. Now, this is an index. Not only do the books printed in behalf of Christ, manifest a waning strength, but, on the contrary, books of science and philosophy are much increased, and grow so contemptuous as to think Christ not worth mentioning; and books of imagination, how insolent they generally are towards God! I say not how much, because it need not be said. And your literature is a most unweeded garden of passion. Your universal Churches, the mystical body of Christ, are forgotten amidst party

contentions. It is all about rites, and establishments, and power, and such like.'

On the cautious principles which are now applied to the preacher's office, and Christian conduct in general—he argues, in another of these discourses—it would not be very difficult to raise an argument against the Baptist. What had he to do with the affairs of a court? And, when he did preach in this royal assembly, what tempted him to speak on royal vices? Could he not have preached before a king as before another man? Are not all men equal in the house of God? The answer to all this is plain. Kings 'are cradled in falsehood; they are fed with flattery; self-will, pride, and passion are nourished in them; the ministry and service of every evil is among them; and a man of truth is, to them, like a stranger from a far country, whose visits are short and few.' And as to prudence—'Prudence dwelleth in earthly palaces; truth is the badge of heaven's court. Prudence teacheth not the point of duty, but how duty is to be discharged; conscience, and the word of God, and the Spirit of God, teach what duty is. The voice of duty speaketh from within, and from above, and not from the world; and he, that would find what his duty is, hath no need to seek here or there, to consult this or that oracle, but to ask it of his own soul. Let him bring things within him to a state of rest; put down passion within his breast, disinherit evil interests, reject the solicitation of a thousand customers, silence vanity, the world's opinion, gain, and possession; and when these stormy waves, within the breast's restless ocean, have been

The preacher before kings.

The relation of duty and prudence.

calmed, he may hear a still small voice—that is the voice of duty; and if he will obey that voice, it will wax louder and louder, till it be loud as the notes of a trumpet, and sweeter than the voice of love. Now, when the voice of duty is recognised, prudence comes into play, . . . to determine which is the best way to carry this fiat into effect. Now is the time for grace of behaviour, for meekness, and gentleness, and all the arts of persuasion—for argument, eloquence, and fearless energy. Take now to yourself all calculations of foresight; strengthen yourself with all friendly advice and aid; and, with your fears, take counsel.'

'Think not'—the preacher continues, after the expansive manner of the pulpit—'that I put off prudence and discretion from the life of a Christian; I do assign to them a secondary place. . . . The doctrines of faith and present utility are the antipodes to each other. Prudence is the philosophy of utility; faith is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Wisdom is not excluded; but a divine wisdom is substituted instead of human wisdom. The conscience, I said, is to be guided by the oracles of God. Now, the word of God is surely wiser than all books, and the Spirit of God is wiser than all men. So, that on this doctrine that I have laid down, the head of wisdom poureth itself into the springs of Christian action; conscience, and the word, and Spirit of God, become to the stream of a man's life like what the ancients fabled of the rivers—that each river had a god, who resided in the caverns of its fountains, and presided over the majestic flow of its streams; and, entering into

Christian doctrine in heathen similitude.

the full court of the ocean god, each deity had a seat of dignity, in proportion to the tribute brought to Neptune. The conscience sits at the fountain-head of action, and there holds counsel with the Lord, and directs the course of a Christian life, by divine admonition, and rideth on the full stream of life, and is borne along (a noble testimonial) into the ocean of eternal good, to contribute its part to the good end of the Almighty's counsel. And the good conscience of men is—in this case, without a fable—received into the courts of God with honour, in proportion to the tribute brought to the universal good, over which God appoints every man a guardian and contributor. Thus, on the great principles of Christian conduct, the Baptist is to be justified from the accusation of rashness, which would be brought against him in days like these, when "usefulness" hath gone near to supplant the liberty of conscience, and the sustenance of faith.'

But let us hear Edward Irving, on those special and perennial topics of the Christian preacher, according to his ability in handling which must ever be his true abiding power and utility, on those closer relationships of humanity—the relations of man to his Maker, and to himself—which it is the proper office of religion to gather up from their torn, ravelled condition, and knit together afresh. Let us hear how our preacher discoursed, to his crowding, breathless hearers, of such topics as are indicated on the margin—of the natural bondage of man's will to an evil bias; of God's fatherly

remembrance, and man's forgetfulness of Him; of the seeming ills of life; of prayer, the forms and the spirit thereof.

'We obey not reason, with which our conduct warreth every day. We obey not even the conception of our understanding. We obey not the rules of prudence; neither do we obey the arrests of experience; but move from side to side, and run in all directions. We advance—we recede—we are stationary. We are always at war with our own selves. Repentant — remorseless — relapsed; crimes against our own feelings—pains and penalties, and acts of penance done before our mind's consciousness; this, I say, is the history of our mind's natural conduct.' Natural bondage of the will.

'Prayer is the spirit's discourse with the Father of Spirits, whereby she taketh high privilege to unburden her obligations—to unbosom her affections—to express her loyal fealty to her God and King; whereby she conveyeth up to heaven the finer senses of the soul, which hath no entertainment on the brute earth, but seeketh its home in the purified sphere of heaven on high. Prayer is the heart's offering towards God, the soul's sacrifice, the only effectual death of pride and selfishness, the source of humility, the breath of piety, and the life of religion. It maketh, and the want of it marreth, a saint. Prayer engendereth a distinct form of manhood—and the highest. As sympathy with self engendereth the selfish form of manhood, in all its fruits, from the meanest to the most heroical, so sympathy with others The nature of prayer.

engendereth the social form of manhood. As there is a literature of which this heroic power is the chief and crowning work, so there is a literature of a spiritual form, of which prayer is the chief and crowning work.'

Having pointed out how contrary to this notion of prayer is the saying of masses, or the repetition of liturgical sentences, the preacher shows Christians of his own communion, that their public prayers also are unlike pious discourses to God. Instead of that sublime strain of devotion and thankfulness which Moses and the children of Israel sang over Israel's deliverance out of the hand of Pharaoh, wherein the soul of the people seems to break its fetters, and to riot in a spiritual jubilee, what have we in *our* prayers over that redemption whereof Israel's deliverance was a poor carnal emblem? A cold enunciation of our belief in it—frequent reiterations of His name who purchased it—a cento of texts of Scripture which make mention of it. Instead of the earnest supplication made by Solomon over the completed temple, which was only a poor emblem of the temple of the Church—instead of that earnest supplication, every sentence of which bows the heart before the Lord, and makes it overflow with the tide of spiritual fulness—what have we, but petition strung to petition in horrid disorder, and almost in contempt of meaning itself. And for Daniel's heart-searching confession over the sins of captive Israel—which was only a poor outward emblem of our captivity under sin—we have what may serve for a good theological article on

Public extemporaneous prayer.

original sin, or a catalogue of past confessions. And for David's forms of devotion to God, and for David's infinite forms of dejection over himself—for those elevations of the soul into the third heaven of adoration; those aspirations of language which seem ready to burst the bounds of its limited sphere—what have we in *our* prayers? A familiar way of speaking to God, as if he were our fellow—an unceremonious way of making our suit to God—a destitution of high desire—everything vulgar, everything tame, everything monotonous; nothing of divine, heart-rending, spirit-stirring, soul-wrapping discourse. And for the sententious wisdom of our Lord's Prayer, where every petition carrieth a world of blessing in its bosom—and instead of the tender endearments with which He revived his disciples, when He was to leave them, but not comfortless—we have tawdry, most unmeaning sentences; not fit for the ear of a man of sense—never employed in worldly society—thought an insult to be offered in a petition to our king, but allowed meet enough for the High Majesty of Heaven. . . Where, in the extemporaneous prayers of the Protestant Churches, is fervent and deep emotion? Where, lofty sentiments of the Godhead? Where, our ardours of love to Christ—bursting expressions of acknowledgment; longing after His grace; groanings of the spirit within itself; tears, sighs, and ejaculations, and whatever other forms of discourse do betoken a mind wound up to its highest efforts—a heart filled with feelings which it cannot express? At best, our prayers have the air of disquisitions and creeds, more than of devotional expressions;

following a narrow routine of devotion; a tribute to popularity and received opinions, rather than an offering to the Lord. Against which profanation—for I will call it by no softer name—against which profanation of public prayer, which hath become tolerant by its frequency, and frequent by the insufficient education of the pastors, God knoweth we have need of caution.'

Peculiarities of Christian prayer.

'All forms of prayer which begin from conceptions of God, as the God of Nature, and the Soul of the Universe, and which wind themselves through high-wrought and long-drawn periods, concerning the infinite enlargement of His attributes, power, and works—however expedient they may be for raising the soul to a high temper of devotion—want the essential character of a Christian prayer; and bespeak rather the man of science, or the poet, than the humble and faithful believer in Christ. And all forms of prayer, and schemes of doctrine, which uphold God in the character of a sovereign—doing His will, and dividing amongst men, according to his pleasure; some advancing and blessing, some reprobating and cursing, from the mere pleasure of his will—however expedient these may be, to restrain the self-confidence and humble the vanity of men, they are essentially Jewish in their character, and out of place in the Christian temple, whereof the gate is open to all; wherein there is no longer any middle wall of partition; but all, of every nation, are welcome, who fear God and work righteousness.

'The spirit of a Christian prayer is not of these kinds; but it is to regard God as the most bountiful of

fathers; who, out of the greatness of His grace, hath given His Son to open the broad gates of His house to the children of men, and to bring the chief of sinners even to His royal presence, to kiss the top of his sceptre. And in that blessed aspect regarding Him, it is our part to come to Him for grace, as children to a father who is able and ready to help in the time of need; never to doubt—never to misgive—but to rest assured, that "as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him."

'Our prayers, therefore, should be from the heart—copious effusions from affectionate hearts towards Him who first loved us, and cannot cease to love us: not the invocations of fear—not beautiful disportings of the fancy among the wonderful works of God—not high-wrought eulogiums of his goodness and grace; but breathings of tenderness—expressions of true affection to Him whom we truly love; of penitence toward Him whom we should never have offended; of praise toward Him whose mercy is recorded in the experience of our souls; of assured trust and confidence, as of children to the most long-suffering, and patient, and bountiful of fathers. Yea, our hearts should open themselves in prayer to God for their many wants, as the infant openeth its hungry mouth, and lifteth up its cry in the ear of its mother; and as that infant, being filled and satisfied, smiles in the face of its mother, and spreads out its little arms to embrace her, in token of the gladness of its heart—so ought our spirits, being filled with the answer of their prayer (which surely they will be), to feel an inward joy and thank-

fulness to the Father of Spirits, and call upon our lips and hands, and upon every obedient member of our body and soul, to express with songs, and with expressions of praise, the emotions with which He hath made us to overflow.'

Incentives to filial piety towards God.

'I pray you, men and brethren, look to the rock whence ye were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye were digged. Take up a handful of dust and ashes, and there behold the materials out of which the Lord God Almighty fashioned man—this living form of man, so quick and pregnant with all sensual and spiritual feeling. And if you would know the kindness which your Father hath put forth in this work of His hands, look to the tribes, from the worm to the lion, all made of as good materials, and many of them of better—in size, strength, fleetness, and durability, surpassing man. But where is their counsel? Where is their government? Where is their knowledge? Where is their religion? Which of them has any fellowship with God, or reasonable intercourse with one another? . . . And what is the earth whereon you tread, and which spreads its flowery carpet beneath your feet? And what are its various fruits, with their varieties to sustain, to refresh, and to cherish human life—the corn, the wine, and the oil? And what, the recurring seasons of divided time—the budding spring, the flowery summer, the joyful vintage, and the lusty harvest, and the homely well-provided winter? And what, the cheerful outgoings of morn and dewy eve, and balmy sleep, and blessed action? What are they all, I ask, but the

sweet cradle, and the blessed condition, into which our Father hath brought us, his children? Is there nothing in the costly preparation, and gladsome welcoming, of our coming; and in the motherly bosom of plentiful affection and food stored for us; and in the fruitful dwelling-place, to the inheritance of which we are born? Is it nothing, that the range of our mansion is the starry heavens, and not cooped within the encumbrance of a narrow shell? Is it nothing; that the skies drop down fatness upon us, and that the river of God's bounty watereth all the garden where we dwell; rather than that we should have griped the rock for our bed, or found our birth-place in the oozy channels of the deep?'

Not in a mood of sentimental optimism, did he thus discourse. A second sermon on 'the Fatherhood of God,' opens with a touching exhibition of the night-side of life. 'I am fully alive to the varieties of our fallen condition; and that though we be all born into this splendid and well furnished palace of creation, some—nay, many—are destined to chambers in it cheerless enough. I am alive to the straits among which many an unconscious infant is doomed to make its hapless entry into life; and, that for lack of the tender accommodations and shelters which tender age requireth, many depart, prematurely, to seek their nourishment and upbringing in a better world than this which frowneth on their birth. I know how tender infancy is girdled round and round with accidents and diseases, which take a fierce delight in preying on childhood; and how the little babe hath to pass one deadly line, and then another deadly line,

Dispensations of seeming ill.

and a third, before it can be said to be fairly seated in life; and, being there arrived, how infirm and unstable is the tenure by which we hold our being; how death threatens us on every side; and how our worldly condition is unstable as the waters, and cannot, for a moment, be trusted in as sure. I am not ignorant that adversity occupieth, in human experience, as large, if not a larger, field, than prosperity; and, that when it comes, it sheds a gloomy twilight over all the enjoyments left. And it is most true, that if a man comes into the world, and then hath his soul filled of God with all affection, and his house full of all riches, he hath, gradually, or all at once—but generally gradually—to part with them, one after another; with friends, with pleasures, with entertainments, and even with senses, if he be spared so long, and with whatever life contains; and to depart out of life naked as he entered it at first.'

Man's estrangement from God.

'Men, in their natural estate, seem to me to bear toward God no more filial regard than do children stolen in their infancy, and never afterward restored; who may bear, as we do, traces of their parents' countenance, yet, in their hearts, bear none. And not more of longing, and not more of affection, do these bereaved parents feel, and not less diligence do they make after their lost children, than doth our Father in Heaven after us, his lost and strayed children; whom, not by one messenger, or two, but by a heaven pouring down bounty on our heads, and an earth springing fertility beneath our feet, and a Gospel fraught with glad tidings

of salvation, He seeks and pursues into every corner of the world, that He may redeem us; and there is hardly an unpeopled waste where He hath not his entreating messengers, and there is not a solitude which doth not speak of Him in its silence. And when we have been sojourning in the imaginary world of our dreams, it speaketh of Him in the refreshment and morning cheerfulness with which He hath endued us, and with which we return to the busy world; and night and day, sustained upon nothing, speak of Him, wherever we be; and the mighty wonders of the deep lift up a solemn voice of our Father; and the frail bark which it heaveth like a toy on its restless bosom, speaks of the care of our heavenly Father. In short, we cannot be so far strayed as to be off our Father's ground, and out of hearing of our Father's messages; and yet we return not our Father's love. Far worse are we than strayed or stolen children, whose case is their calamity, but not their crime; and who still hold, against time's destroying teeth, long memory of name and kindred, and burst away from their withholders, and roam the world in quest of their nativity.

'I cannot find the resemblance of our condition in any instance of fiction on the earth; there is nothing like, or second to it. I am forced to leave the real world, and serve myself with a superstition which I think must have grown out of this truth—a superstition of which men were heretofore credulous, and of which the venerable Luther himself was not ashamed to own the power. Living, as we do, in our Father's ample house, strewed about with pleasure and amuse-

ment; caressed with our Father's embraces; soothed with his tender voice; fed with hopes, and promises, and health, and gladness—yea and visited, in this our nursery, with angel messages of grace, and royal overtures in the name of God's everlasting children; tenderly treated at all seasons, yet, nevertheless, skulking from His presence—sliding back from His approaches—speaking of Him without any emotion, or with scorn. This seems to me to realize the superstition of our fathers, that children were sometimes stolen away by the hands of evil spirits, and their room replaced with wicked creatures, whose crooked and hell-derived nature no nursery can humanize, and whose blood, of unearthly mixture, is kindred and kindly to no earthly creature. And, truly wild though the superstition be, it doth not outgo the case of our unnatural treatment of our tender Father, whom not His Heaven—the ancient residence of His blessedness—can bribe to obedience.'

An entreaty to return.

'I do entreat, by the roseate bed prepared for your reception in this world—I do entreat, by God's sleepless waiting upon you through all your frowardness; by all the delights which have entered, through every sense, into the quick spirit; and by all the spirit's wondrous power of digesting them into harmonious knowledge, and dressing them in forms of fancy, and bringing them forth to the guidance of others; by all your recollections of good; by all your recoveries from evil; by all the scenes of happiness and mirth in which you have had a part; by all the sufferings and afflictions

from which your soul hath taken new strength, and learned new wisdom; by these, and everything else blissful in nature and providence—I call upon you to witness your Father in Heaven's bountiful heart, and to refuse him no longer your filial reverence and obedience.'

If only these fragments of Mr. Irving's earlier sermons, in the Caledonian Church, Cross Street, remained to us, we might be less surprised at the extraordinary admiration excited by the preacher, than that there should have been any exceptions to it. Forbearing however, as premature, an examination into the pulpit characteristics displayed—or rather, indicated—in the foregoing passages, we will only record, before lifting the leaf, that in the spring-tide of his fame, the great London preacher returned to the scenes of his youthful struggles, aspirations, and loves, to fulfil the tender vows there plighted. At Kirkaldy, on the 14th of October, 1822, Edward Irving was married to Miss Isabella Martin. That he took his bride thence to his father's house, we might have conjectured, were we not assured of it by Carlyle's exact record of a rëunion at Annan. 'Bodily and spiritually, there was not (in that November, 1822) a man more full of genial and energetic life in all these islands.' I can scarcely desire, reader, your company through the pages that are to follow, if you do not feel a new and deeper interest in their subject from the perusal of that simple marriage register, and of this striking testimony. Taken together, what a history

Irving's marriage.

they contain—what a prophecy they utter! The energetic and genial man—how much of both qualities was he not likely to owe to the trust and gentleness of his long-betrothed? What greater fulness of power and wisdom, in dealing with the great heart of his generation, may we not expect from him, now that he has drawn closer to his own this one woman's heart? May we not imagine, that the thoughts of the toilsome student, of the baffled probationer, of the coadjutant pastor, often glanced to the manse at Kirkaldy, and fetched thence strength, or solace, as might be needed? And are we not sure, that from the height of renown to which he had leaped at a bound, he cast no less frequent glances thither—feeling his new eminence but a bleak and chill one, if he could not build upon it a home for his chosen mate?

CHAPTER IV.

THE ORATOR FOR GOD.

Not without hesitation, was this head-line written. The expression is unusual—and to be unusual without a purpose, is to be impertinent. What is worse, it sounds irreverently—which should be avoided, as of 'the very appearance of evil.' But it is not without reason adopted; for it sets forth the present phase of the subject as none other form of words could do. And it can scarcely be irreverent, since its equivalent may be heard, at any time, from the meanest pulpit in Christendom: 'As ambassadors for God, we pray you in Christ's stead.'

The reader has already discovered that Edward Irving's idea of the Christian ministry was a large and lofty one—that besides dealing with the highest of human interests, it should take in the whole breadth of human faculties and experience. But Irving had moreover the conviction of a personal call to a special work—a conviction without which, we may say, no man ever did a great work, and

Irving's idea of his work.

with which, any man may make even a small work great, from the manner of its doing. As a Scottish probationer, he gave distinct utterance to the complaint, that his contemporaries, with rare exceptions, did not fill the office of an evangelist in an apostolic spirit—the spirit that wrestled with the very principalities of evil; nor modelled themselves upon those later, and more accessible, pattern-men, who made the English pulpit the greatest of social powers, and gained for their own names an immortality of literary renown. Now, an independent metropolitan divine—standing up in the city where Latimer, Barrow, Sherlock, South, Tillotson, had discoursed undying words to generations long since dead—he startled that immobile city by the boldness of his practical aspirations; proclaimed himself the peer of its intellectual aristocracy; and avowed a mission to the irreligious great, talented, and influential. Either in pursuance of a pre-design, or from the courage engendered of success, he seized upon the press for the repetition and prolongation of his message; and wrote upon the sheets rapidly thrown off by his lips and pen, 'Orations for the Oracles of God, and an Argument for the Judgment to Come.'

Publication of the 'Orations.'

It was exactly twelve months from Mr. Irving's settlement at the Caledonian Church when this remarkable volume* made its appearance. It consisted, substantially, of twelve or thirteen connected discourses, delivered on Sunday evenings; and retained the style, though not

* The following is an exact transcript of the title: 'For the Oracles of God, Four Orations. For Judgment to Come, an Argument in nine parts.'

the forms, of the oral address. The first division of the work—scarcely a sixth, in bulk, of the whole—was dedicated to Dr. Chalmers, and the second to Dr. Gordon. The former dedication contained nothing more remarkable than an explicit allusion to the Doctor's hearing 'one of my discourses, when I had made up my mind to leave my native land for solitary travel in foreign parts.' But the preface was an altogether extraordinary production. It opened with the enunciation of two startling, and not inoffensive propositions; the first, that the chief obstacle to the progress of divine truth over the minds of men is the want of its being sufficiently presented to them; the second, that in this Christian country, nine-tenths of every class know nothing at all of the advantages and applications of revelation; and that this ignorance, in both the higher and lower orders, is 'not so much due to the want of inquisitiveness on their part, as to the want of a sedulous and skilful ministry on the part of those to whom it is entrusted.' It did little to soothe alarmed and wounded sensibilities, that the author went on to say, he did not mean to reflect upon the clergy, but to direct their attention to the general failure of their ministry; the cause of which he indicated, one would say, with equal truth and beauty, thus:—'Until they acquire the password which is to convey them into every man's encampment, they speak to that man from a distance, and at a disadvantage. . . . . They must discover new vehicles for conveying the truth as it is in Jesus into the minds of the people;

Assertion of general ministerial deficiencies,

poetical, historical, scientific, political, and sentimental vehicles. . . . . They (the clergy) prepare men for teaching gipsies, for teaching bargemen, for teaching miners; men who understand their ways of conceiving and estimating truth—why not train others for teaching imaginative men, and political men, and legal men, and scientific men, who bear the world in hand?' In this volume, the preface continued, the author had 'set the example of two new methods of handling religious truths—the *Oration* and the *Argument;* the one intended to be after the manner of the ancient Oration, the best vehicle for addressing the minds of men which the world hath seen—far beyond the sermon, of which the very name hath seemed to inspire drowsiness and tedium; the other, after the manner of the ancient Apologies.'

Abstract of the volume.

The first and second 'Orations' treat of preparation for, and the manner of, consulting the oracles of God; the third and fourth, of obedience to the oracles of God. The first, second, and third parts of the 'Argument,' are an inquiry into responsibility in general, or the 'constitution under which it hath pleased God to place the world;' the fourth illustrates the good effects of this constitution on individuals and on society; the fifth exhibits the preliminaries, or conditions, of judgment; the sixth and eighth concern the solemnities and the issues of the Last Judgment; the seventh argues the 'only way to escape condemnation;' the last is a review of the argument, and an 'endeavour to bring it home to the hearts of the sons of men.'

The 'Orations' open with this striking, impressive allusion to the supernatural circumstances which attended the original promulgation of the 'Oracles of God:'—'There was a time when each revelation of the word of God had an introduction into this earth which neither permitted men to doubt whence it came, nor wherefore it was sent. If, at the giving of each successive truth, a star was not lighted up in heaven, as at the birth of the Prince of Truth, there was done upon the earth a wonder, to make her children listen to the message of their Maker. The Almighty made bare his arm; and, through mighty acts shown by his holy servants, gave demonstration of his truth; and found for it a sure place among the other matters of human knowledge and belief. But now, the miracles of God have ceased; and Nature, secure and unmolested, is no longer called on for testimonies to her Creator's voice. No burning bush draws the footsteps to his presence-chamber; no invisible voice holds the ear awake; no hand cometh forth from the obscure to write his purpose in letters of flame. The vision is shut up, and the testimony is sealed, and the word of the Lord is ended; and this solitary volume, with its chapters and verses, is the sum total of all for which the chariot of heaven made so many visits to the earth, and the Son of God Himself tabernacled and dwelt among us.' Exordium.

This Revealed Wisdom—the orator complains—hath fallen from her high estate in the estimation of men; 'to the commonalty of Christians, her oracles have fallen into a household commonness, and her visits into a cheap Wisdom contemned and feared.

familiarity; while, by the multitude, she is mistaken for a minister of terror, sent to oppress poor mortality with moping melancholy, and do a deadly office upon the happiness of human-kind.' To say the best, the perusal of the Word hath reached the rank of a daily formal duty. 'And to speak not the best, but the fair and common truth, this book, the offspring of the divine mind, and the perfection of heavenly wisdom, is permitted to lie, from day to day—perhaps, from week to week—unheeded and unperused; never welcome to our happy, healthy, and energetic moods; admitted, if admitted at all, in seasons of sickness, feeble-mindedness, and disabling sorrow. That which was sent to be a spirit of ceaseless joy and hope within the heart of man, is treated as the enemy of happiness, and the murderer of enjoyment; eyed askance as the remembrancer of death, and the very messenger of hell!'

'Oh! if books had but tongues to speak their wrongs, then might this book well exclaim—Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! I came from the love and embrace of God; and meek Nature, to whom I brought no boon, did me rightful homage. To man I came, and my words were to the children of men. I disclosed to you the mysteries of hereafter, and the secrets of the throne of God. I set open to you the gate of salvation, and the way of eternal life, heretofore unknown. Nothing in heaven did I withhold from your hope and ambition; and, upon your earthly lot, I poured the full horn of divine providence and consolation. But ye requited me with no welcome; ye held no festivity on my arrival; ye sequestered me

The wrongs of the Bible.

from happiness and heroism, closeting me with sickness and infirmity; ye make not of me, nor use me for, your guide to wisdom and prudence, but press me into your list of duties, and withdraw me to a mere corner of your time; and most of ye set me at naught, and utterly disregard me. I came, the fulness of the knowledge of God: angels delighted in my company, and desired to dive into my secrets. But ye mortals place masters over me; subjecting me to the discipline and dogmatism of men, and tutoring me in your schools of learning. I came not to be silent in your dwellings, but to speak welfare to you and to your children. I came to rule, and my throne to set up, in the hearts of men. Mine ancient residence was the bosom of God: no residence will I have but the soul of an immortal; and, if you had entertained me, I should have possessed you of the peace I had with God, "when I was with him, and was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him."'

The claims of revelation are then specified as threefold:—'A due preparation for receiving it; a diligent attention to it while it is disclosing; a strict observance of it when it is delivered.' To meet the first of these, imagination is summoned to supply that circumstantial pomp, or solemnity, which did attend the ancient utterance of the oracle. The mind is charged to put off its vestment of ordinary things—a partial ear, a straitened understanding, and a disaffected will—and array itself in perfect liberty of attention. The dogmatism of formularies, and the distraction of controversy, are especially censured. The 'pre-occupation of Christians with the distinctive

The claims of revelation.

opinions' of their Church or sect, is assumed (as well it might) as a fact; and its cause attributed to 'the early use of catechisms' and 'narrow epitomes'—which, by presenting truth exclusively to the intellect, divorce religion from the affection, fancy, and sympathies. Then follows this nobly catholic and eloquent passage:—

Dogmatism and Controversy.

'In the train of them comes Controversy, with his rough voice and unmeek aspect, to disqualify the soul for a full and fair audience of her Maker's word. The points of the faith we have been called on to defend, or which are reputable with our party, assume, in our esteem, an importance disproportionate to their importance in the Word, which we come to relish chiefly when it goes to sustain them; and the Bible is hunted for arguments and texts of controversy, which are treasured up for future service. The solemn stillness which the soul should hold before her Maker, so favourable to meditation, and rapt communion with the throne of God, is destroyed, at every turn, by suggestions of what is orthodox and evangelical, where all is orthodox and evangelical; the spirit of the reader becomes lean, being fed with abstract truths and formal propositions; his temper, uncongenial, being ever disturbed with controversial suggestions; his prayers, undevout recitals of his opinions; his discourses, technical announcements of his faith. Intellect—cold intellect—hath the sway over heavenward devotion and holy fervour. Man—contentious man—hath the attention which the unsearchable Godhead should undividedly have; and the fine, full harmony of heaven's melodious voice, which,

heard apart, was sufficient to lap the soul in ecstacies unspeakable, is jarred, interfered with; and the heavenly spell is broken by the recurring conceits, sophisms, and passions of men. Now, truly, an utter degradation it is of the Godhead, to have His Word in league with that of any man, or any council of men. What matter to me, whether it is the Pope, or any work of the human mind, that is exalted to the equality of God? If any helps are to be imposed for the understanding, or safe guarding or sustaining, of the Word, why not the help of statues and pictures for my devotion? Therefore, while the warm fancies of the Southerns have given their idolatry to the ideal forms of noble art, let us Northerns beware we give not our idolatry to the cold and coarse abstractions of human intellect.'

A similar strain is heard throughout the second 'Oration.' The pre-occupation of worldly minds having been analyzed, and the general divorcement of literature from the wisdom of God lamented, the orator points out, and censures, the dissociation of divers parts of Scripture from the unity of revealed wisdom:—'These are what they call *doctrines;* as if every moral precept, every spiritual grace, every divine example, every hope, every promise, and every threatening, were not a doctrine. And these doctrines, which they exalt into pre-eminence, are sacrificed to in all religious expositions; and have grown into popular idols; and frown excommunication upon every one who would doubt their pre-eminence, or insist for a declaration of the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; and, truly, were there not higher fears

False estimate of 'doctrines.'

than the fear even of the religious world, and greater loss than the loss of religious fame, I would hardly venture into an exposition of the evils which have arisen from this bold interference with the proportions of the divine truth. These doctrines, truly, should be like the mighty rivers which fertilize our island; whose waters, before escaping to the sea, have found their way to the roots of each several flower, and plant, and stately tree, and covered the face of the land with beauty, and with fertility—spreading plenty for the enjoyment of man and beast. . . . . But it hath appeared to me, that most unlike such wide-spreading streams of fertility, they are often, as it were, confined within rocky channels of intolerance and disputation, where they hold noisy brawl with every impediment; drawing off the natural juices of the soil; and, instead of fruits and graces, leaving all behind naked, barren, and unpeopled!'

Catechetical books and formularies, as means of discerning heresy and preserving unity (an end, the very contrary of which, it seems to the present writer, they have most fatally promoted), the orator—as became the sworn minister of a Church in which they are so greatly used—professes himself content with, and thankful for; but complains that they have become as were the traditions of the elders to the Jews, and as are the traditions of the fathers to Catholics—almost recants his profession of contentment, by the sinister addition: —'All I do is to believe them, and that, not until I have carried an appeal to the word of God—which surely were as worthy a first appeal, and a maiden faith'—and

breaks forth into renewed lamentations over the prevalence of the spirit they engender. 'Our spirits become intolerant of all who find in the Bible any tenets differing from our own. . . An accurate statement of opinion—from the pulpit, from the lips of childhood, from the death-bed of age—becomes all in all. . . Who can bear the logical and metaphysical aspect with which Religion looks out from the temples of this land; playing about the head, but starving the well-springs of the heart, and drying up the fertile streams of a holy and charitable life? For, an accurate systematic form is the last perfection of knowledge; and a systematic thinker is the perfection of an educated man. . . . Religion hath become a set of opinions and party distinctions; separated from high endowments, and herding with cheap popular accomplishments; a mere serving-maid of every-day life, instead of being the mistress of all earthly, and the preceptress of all heavenly, sentiments —the very queen of all high gifts, graces, and perfections, in every walk of life!'

Mischievous influences of creeds.

In discoursing on 'Obedience to the Oracles of God,' the oration somewhat digresses into the argument. The orator dissuades from 'revolt against the traditions of God as an imposition upon the freedom of man's estate,' by the analogy thereto of our inevitable bondage to the collective wisdom of our ancestors and contemporaries. 'Society is before-hand with us; and along with its beautified fields, and happy inventions, and manifold conditions of comfort, hands down to us, as the price

The rationale of obedience and disobedience.

of these, a thousand laws and restraints upon the freedom of our conduct.' He traces to one root—the self-willedness of human nature—rebellion against social and divine law. Discipline, he shows, is the appointed corrective to this almost universal disposition; and contends, that right education will most likely induce acquiescence in 'the statutes of the Lord'—the authority of God, the love of Christ, spiritual aid, and moral distinctions, being as easily apprehended by a child as the authority, love, instruction, and laws of the household. 'This is the secret of our aversion, at man's estate, to the laws of God—the want of a proper selection and application of means in early life. It is not that these laws are ill-adapted to our nature, whereof they are the guides, the sweeteners, and the perfecters; but that our nature hath got under adverse government, and been fed up with indulgences, and degraded with services, from which it cannot now, without great pain and exertion, be delivered. It is not that God hath withheld his blessing—which blessing I understand to be like an atmosphere around every man, that he hath at all times free liberty to breathe in, through the use of appointed means; but, it is that in our youth we were not properly applied to, and misthrove for want of proper spiritual treatment. Far from us be the unholy office of reflecting upon our parents . . . farther be it from us to excuse their unworthy children . . . but farther from us than both, be the impious thought, that there is any son of man whom the Almighty doth not wish to become a son of light; and for whose growth in grace, from very childhood,

he hath not set forth a sufficient supply in the everlasting Gospel!' Nevertheless, neither perversion of nature, nor lack of right training, may stand as an excuse for refusing the obedience of the mature mind to the only perfect and authoritative law. The inevitable alternative of obedience or perdition, is presented to every man on arriving at a 'knowledge of the testimonies.' And despite its unfashionableness, both in the world and in the Church, the preacher sets himself to motive the choice by representations of terror.

'This, then, is the simple truth, that if you obey not the Scriptures, ye shall surely perish. You may despise the honour done you by the Majesty above — you may spurn the sovereignty of Almighty God—you may revolt from Creation's universal rule to bow before its Creator, and stand in momentary rebellion against his ordinances; his overtures of mercy you may cast contempt on, and crucify afresh the royal personage who bore them; you may riot in your licentious liberty for a while, and make light of his indulgence and long-suffering. But come, at length, it will, when Revenge shall array herself to go forth, and Anguish shall attend her, and from the wheels of their chariot ruin and dismay shall shoot far and wide among the enemies of the King; whose desolation shall not tarry, and whose destruction shall be swift as the wing of the whirlwind—hopeless as the conclusion of eternity, and the reversion of doom. Then, around the fiery concave of the wasteful pit, the clang of grief shall ring; and the flinty wretch who, in life, repelled tender mercy, shall now find the door of

The doom of the disobedient

spurned mercy for ever barred; and the soft and gentle spirit, which dissolved in voluptuous pleasures, shall now dissolve in weeping sorrows, and outbursting lamentations. And the gay glory of time shall depart; and a sportful liberty shall be bound for ever in the chain of obdurate necessity. The green earth, with all her blooming beauty and bowers of peace, shall depart. The morning and evening salutations of kinsmen, and the ever-welcome voice of friendship, and the tender whispering of full-hearted affection, shall depart, for the sad discord of weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. And the tender names of children, and father, and mother, and wife, and husband, with the communion of domestic love and affection, and the inward touches of natural instinct—which family compact, when uninvaded by discord, *wraps the live-long day into one swell of tender emotion*, making earth's lowly scenes to breathe of heaven itself—all, all shall pass away; and instead, shall come the level lake that burneth, and the solitary dungeon, and the desolate bosom, and the throes and tossings of horror and hopelessness, and the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched. . . . With this in arrear, what boots liberty, pleasure, enjoyment—all within the hour-glass of time, or the round earth's continent—all the sensibilities of life, all the powers of man, all the attractions and affections of woman!'

This terror-striking array of the 'powers of the world to come'—the more fearful because, despite its too rapid transitions of imagery, it is *moral*, not physical, *natural*, not arbitrary, agencies of torture that are

chiefly exhibited—this array of the terrors of the law is followed by a challenge to the hardihood of endurance —an attempt to cow the soul into admitting the justice of the complicated torment, the remediless woe, with which it is threatened—the demand, 'What hinders you from giving your soul to the divine institutions?' —the assurance that a change of the will suffices to change the destiny (men being 'never converted, but always converting')—and the exhortation:—'Come over, cast in your lot with the saints. You have everything to gain—peace of conscience, a divine joy, a fellowship with God, a special providence, a heritage of promise and blessing, a triumphant death, and a crown of everlasting life. The choice of men are here —the prime specimens of manhood, the royal priesthood, and chosen generation of mankind; and worth domestic, with Piety, her guardian genius, is here; and worth public, with Charity, her guardian genius, is here; and enterprise heroic, with Faith, her guardian genius, is here. The chief fathers of science and knowledge have likewise clave with the saints; and the greatest inventors, the inventors of reformation in all worthy matters, are here; apostles, and prophets, and patriarchs, are here; and finally, the first-born of every creature, who is God over all, blessed for ever!'

The last 'Oration,' in setting forth, as the first reward of obeying the oracles of God, the knowledge thence obtained, gives expression to a consciousness common, probably, to both the highest and lowest forms of mind, though it may be unknown to the sciolist and the selfish — the

The rewards of obedience.

consciousness, namely, of unsatisfactoriness in nature, either as an object of taste or science, until we can link with her beauty or her processes 'a fellow spirit, or a generous cause of human welfare.' 'Unfeigned friendship, chaste love, domestic affection, pure heavenward devotion—who compares the intensity and delight of these with the stale and heartless sympathy there is between a naturalist and his museum, or a scholar and his books?' And with this almost universal instinct, is identified the dissatisfaction of the soul, 'when, without a guide, she goes to seek God in His natural universe; groping about and unrested; hungering for larger insight; perplexed with difficulties, and, finding "no end, in wandering mazes lost.'" The revelation of the Divine perfectness, with all its cognate truths, is then justly set forth as an ample reward for the submission of the understanding to the oracle. With equal truth—with equal fidelity to the experience of the best of us—it is shown next, that except a man be content with the slavery of custom and example, or be of such weak passions and strong understanding as to need neither ruler nor guide, 'he shall find how insufficient are his better perceptions and powers; how weak reason is, how unwilling is will, how conscience expires among the uncertainties, and resolution among the difficulties, of an upright course.' Incitement to a life of enterprise, and instruction for the conduct thereof, is exhibited as the second reward of obedience. 'There is a spell of custom—the Scriptures call it a dead sleep—in which men are bound. They will not think, they will not feel, for themselves. . . . And

what comes of this spell-bound slavery? The strong and immortal parts of nature wax weak, the love of good degenerates, and the power of good altogether dies. To renovate nature, to fill her with a divine nature—to make men, whatever their condition, the companions of God, and the members of Jesus Christ; objects of angel visits; the honoured ministers of God upon the earth; kings and priests to God—nothing less than this is the design of the Holy Scriptures, and their fruit to those who obey them. Know them, and upon the knowledge act, and all meanness shall forsake your conduct, with all hypocrisies; and all the struggles of passion with interest, and of interest with duty; and your character shall come forth in the strength and beauty of holiness, to the honour and glory of your Creator.' The orator had yet a third topic left—and one that always tempts the feeble rhetorician to a flight beyond the strength of human pinion. Irving, however, in treating of the eternal gain of the obedient, as of the eternal loss of the despiser, still drew the 'sacred materials of fancy' from the hearts of his hearers. Have you groaned — he asks them — under the bondage of imperfection? Deliverance from that is heaven. Have you conceived pictures of quiet and peaceful enjoyment amidst beautiful and refreshing scenes? The everlasting realities of these is heaven. A few sentences suffice to him to sum up the scripture imagery of heaven; and the summary is followed by the exclamation—'O what untried forms of happy being, what cycles of revolving bliss, await the just! Conception cannot reach it, nor experience present

materials for the picture of its similitude; and though thus figured out by the choicest emblems, they do no more represent it, than the name of Shepherd describes the watchful guardianship of Christ, or the name of the Father, the unspeakable love of Almighty God.'

The orator's peroration.

The 'Orations' close with a rebuke to men of talent, and the proud of intellectual power, that they allow themselves to be undecided upon the subject of religion, and heedless of the generally acknowledged source of authoritative information concerning it. 'If immortality be nothing but the conjuration of priests to cheat the world, then let it pass, and our books go to the wind like the Sybil's leaves; but if immortality be neither the dream of fond enthusiasts, nor the trick of artful priests, but the revelation of the righteous God—then let us have the literature, and the science, and the practice, for the long after-stage of our being, as well as for the present time, which is but its porch.' The literature of the day is characterised as unchristian in sentiment and spirit ('such virulence of party feeling, and violence of personal abuse, and cruel anatomy of men's faults and failings—such inventions of wit and humour to disguise truth, and reason, and falsehood')—but the general culture of thought is urged as a novel stimulus to religious zeal. But not zeal alone, does the orator seek to inflame. 'The character of the age calls for argument, and deep feeling, and eloquence. . . . Religion is not now to be propagated by rebuking the free scope of thought, and drafting, as it were, every weak creature that will abase his power of mind before

the zeal and unction of a preacher, and schooling the host of weaklings to keep close and apart from the rest of the world. This both begins wrong and ends wrong. It begins wrong by converting only a part of the mind to the Lord, and holding the rest in superstitious bonds. It ends wrong in not sending your man forth to combat, in his courses, with the unconverted.' Deprecating misunderstanding of these repeated allusions to the degeneracy of the Church, he closes them by the declaration of his solemn conviction:—'That until advocates of religion do arise to make unhallowed poets, and undevout dealers in science, and intemperate advocates of policy, and all other pleaders before the public mind, give place, and know the inferiority of their various provinces to this of ours —till this most fatal error, that our subject is second-rate, be dissipated by a first-rate advocation of it—till we can shift these others into the back ground of the great theatre of thought, by clear superiority in the treatment of our subject—we shall never see the men of understanding in this nation brought back to the fountains of living water, from which their fathers drew the life of all their greatness.' Still, distrusting the seemliness, or even intelligibleness, of this language, the orator reassures himself by a glance of profound melancholy at the sea of life, laborious without hope, and gay without happiness, that rolls around him; swept by the chilling blast of death, that freezes up all activity, and binds destiny for evermore. And with these words—words to bow the head and swell the heart—he lays aside his pen:—'How oft hath this city, where

I now write these lamentations over a thoughtless age, been filled and emptied of her people since first she reared her imperial head! How many generations of her revellers have gone to another kind of revelry; how many generations of her gay courtiers to a royal residence where courtier arts are not; how many generations of her toilsome tradesmen to the place of silence, whither no gain can follow them! How time hath swept over her, age after age, with its consuming wave, swallowing every living thing, and bearing it away unto the shores of eternity! The sight and thought of all which, is my assurance that I have not, in the heat of my feelings, surpassed the merit of the case. The theme is fitter for an indignant prophet, than an uninspired sinful man.' May we not say, the theme has been handled throughout, if with only the wisdom of the fallible, yet with the spirit-searching power of the inspired?

Object and necessity of the 'Argument.'

The design of the 'Argument' is described in the dedication, as that of recovering 'the great subject of Judgment to Come from poetical visionaries on the one hand, and from religious rhapsodists on the other; and to place it upon the foundation of divine revelation, of human understanding, and of common good.' The orator—now become the apologist; defending instead of eulogising, aiming to convince rather than to command—wisely puts himself in harmony with the first conditions of success, by a cheerful recognition of the necessity for his exertions. 'We are growing wiser than our

fathers, who were content with a train of human authorities. . . . this age requireth religious truth to be justified, like other truth, by showing its benefit to the mind itself, and to society at large. . . . The ear of all men is for ever shut to the authority of names. . . . They even hold cheap our venerable theological language, though it can boast of great antiquity; and they insist upon its being translated into common phrases, that they may understand its meaning. They will not listen unless we gratify them in this reasonable request, but allow us to have our disputations to ourselves while we cover them with that venerable disguise. In order, therefore, to have a chance of a hearing, I have refrained from systematic forms of speech, and endeavoured to speak of each subject in terms proper to it; and to address each feeling of human nature in the language most likely to move it—in short, to argue like a *man*, not a *theologian*; like a *Christian*, not a *Churchman*.' Further on, he speaks of the 'good feeling, good sense, and commonweal of men,' as being, because 'unchangeable in their nature, the only proper receptacles for the unchangeable truth of revelation.'

With the same candid admission of his hearers' right to a full and intelligible statement of the case—and a warning that he intends an assault upon no one faculty of their nature, but upon all—he opens his first discourse upon the text, 'God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world:'—'The tribunal before which we choose to plead this most grave and momentous question, is the whole reason and understanding

of man. Not his intellect merely, to which common arguments are addressed; but his affections, his interests, his hopes, his fears, his wishes; in one word, his whole and undivided soul. It is not with the intention of confusing his judgment, that we will endeavour to take his human nature upon every side; but because we think our case so important, and so good, as to solicit the verdict of every faculty which human nature possesseth. We feel that questions touching the truth of revelation have been too long treated in a logical or scholastic method, which doth address itself I know not to what function of the mind; and not finding this used in Scripture, or successful in practice, we are disposed to try another method, and appeal our cause to every sympathy of the soul which it doth naturally bear upon. We shall speak, according as it suits the topic in hand, to the parts of human nature which the poet addresseth; to the parts of human nature which the economist addresseth; no less than to those which the logician addresseth. Nevertheless, after a logical method we shall do so; that is, we shall present, before these affections of the mind, our question in a fair and undisguised form, without fear and without partiality. Wherefore, all we ask of our reader, who is our judge, is, to have the eyes of his mind as much as possible unveiled from any prejudice, and the affections of his nature unrestrained by any ancient habit from moving with natural freedom to whatever may have charm in his eye. For the subject we have to bring before him, is one in which every faculty of his nature is interested;

The understanding not the exclusive object of appeal.

requiring imagination to conceive its ample bounds; judgment to weigh its justice; hope and fear to feel its consequences; and affection to embrace all the tenderness and goodness of its design.'

If the advocate had intended only an appeal to the understanding, this next following passage would have been unfair; for it prejudges the whole question, in the sympathy of all good men. Perhaps, never was more exquisite expression given to the saddest fact of human nature—the impotence of the finest mechanism to work out, unassisted, satisfying results:—'In which [the convincing men of a righteous judgment to come], if we are enabled to succeed, we shall have done them an unspeakable service. For this coming event, which, to every man, is the decision of the everlasting future, being understood, and sealed in our high regards, will naturally cast forward into time the brightness of its hopes, and the shadow of its fears—calling up from their graves all our past transactions, and arraying against us everything as when it was first conceived. The judgment ought to give value to every current thought, and importance to every passing act; making life a diligent, serious occupation of time, instead of a laborious destruction of it, or an idle, gay diversion. Thought would become a constant device for the good ends which God hath set before us, and action, a constant enterprise to bring these ends about; and (*seeing it is placed within the power of every creature to find acceptance of his Judge*, and everlasting glory) life would become full not only of good endeavours, but joyful prospects, were

Necessity of future judgment to present rectitude.

men convinced and mindful of the last day, which is to sum up all the past, and decide all the future of their existence. There manifestly wants some such husbanding and equalizing power to make the faculties of man turn themselves to the most account. Some drop asleep amidst sensual gratifications, and do nothing for the commonweal but consume its stores; others idle amongst trifles, passing the bright season of youth in vain and empty shows; others fight against their own and the public peace, wielding every power they can command for the aggrandisement of themselves, at every hazard and expense. There is no spring that never runs down to move the machinery of a single man's life; there is no common spring that never runs down to move harmoniously the combined machinery of society. Powers of good are slumbering for want of a call; instruments rusting for want of an occasion; and a meagre unsatisfying recollection of occasion lost, and time misspent, is the portion of almost every man. What laborious trifling, what ingenuity of wickedness, what self-torturing *ennui*, what artificial stimulants, what brutalizing excess, there is in this weary world! To reach distinction and power, you must fight battles, and be the death of thousands. To be a hero, you must wade through seas of blood. To be a statesman, you must submit the soul to suppleness, and be the creature of creatures like yourself. *There wanteth a power to enable a man to turn the wheel of his own destiny;* and by diligence and patience to arrive at true greatness and blessedness. To set forth such a power, is the argument of our present discourse.'

Many succeeding pages are occupied with an argument in nowise differing, but in grandeur and occasional felicity of expression, from that of Butler and others—a defence of men's responsibility to God, from the analogy of their responsibility to each other; taking the latest of jurisconsults, Bentham, to witness to the grounds of that responsibility. But, in treating of 'the sublime and inaccessible reach of virtue which characterizes the Divine law,' there occurs one of the numerous digressive dissertations by which the preacher designed to relieve the attention of his hearers, and gratify the bent of his own genius. 'It is the nature of man —especially of youth, which determineth the cast of future manhood—to place before him the highest patterns in that kind of excellence at which he aimeth. Human nature thirsteth for the highest and the best, not the most easily attained. Oh heavens! how the soul of man is restless and unbound—how it lusteth after greatness—how it revolveth around the sphere of perfection, but cannot enter in—how it compasseth round the seraph-guarded verge of Eden, but cannot enter in. Our woe-begone and self-tormented poet hath so feigned it of Cain; but it is not a wicked murderer's part thus upward to sore, and sigh that he can go no higher; but it is the part of every noble faculty of the soul which God hath endowed with purity and strength above its peers. For the world is but the average product of the minds that make it up; its laws are for all those that dwell therein, not for the gifted few; its customs are covenants for the use of the many: and when it pleaseth

God's provision for man's ideality.

God to create a master spirit in any kind—a Bacon in philosophy, a Shakspeare in fancy, a Milton in poetry, a Newton in science, a Locke in sincerity and truth—they must . . . lift up the limits of enjoyment in that direction, and plant them a little onward, into the regions of unreclaimed thought . . . . . And it is the best prognostic of a youth to be found so occupying himself with thoughts beyond his present power, and above his present place. The young aspirant after military renown, reads the campaigns of the greatest conquerors the world hath produced. The infant patriot hath Hampden, and Russell, and Sydney, ever in his eye. The young poet consumes the silent hours of night over the works of masters in every tongue, though himself hath hardly tuned a lyre. The noble minded Churchman (of whom, alas! there are but few), doats on the Hookers, and the Gilpins, and the Knoxes, of past times; and the stern, unyielding Nonconformist, talks to you of Luther, and Baxter, and the two thousand self-devoted priests (proud days those for England!); and the artist fills his study with casts from the antique, and drains both health and means to their very dregs in pilgrimages to the shrined pictures of the masters. And in *moral purity* alone shall we be condemned to drudge at everyday performances? In the noblest of all the walks of man—generosity, forgiveness, vestal chastity, matrimonial fidelity, incorrupt truthfulness and faith—shall we have no tablets of perfection to bring before the people, out of which they may form their idea of a perfect, undefiled man, and after which they may be constantly upon the stretch?

Here alone, shall we have no room for desire to range beyond present attainments—no hopes to embody in the distant future—nothing to sigh after, or pray for—nothing to contemplate but the bloated pictures of actual life, the dwarfish specimens of character we behold around us? This were most fatal to those departments of excellence upon which the happiness of man turns more than all the rest.'

The remainder of the Second Part, and the whole of the Third, are occupied in a close grapple with the understanding and the conscience, in defence of that 'divine constitution of things' by virtue of which every man is at once sealed under condemnation and proffered forgiveness. The presentation of a perfect law of life —it is argued—is necessary to the regulation of the springs of action: necessarily defective is the legislation that deals only with overt action; and this defect is aggravated into mischievousness by attempts to make up for it by sharpness of administration. That you are all faulty, in the eye of this perfect law, you all admit; and if you did not, common parlance would assert it for you. That your good intentions, righteous resolutions, the overbearing power of circumstances, your voluntary penances, your remedial efforts, are inadequate to avert condemnation, is evident from all the analogies that can be brought to bear. At this point of the argumentation, the doctrine of forgiveness through faith in Jesus Christ, is introduced. The results of His life and death are set forth as these—that guilt being cancelled by the act of penitent belief, obedience is made easy by the transcription of an

abstract law into a human life, by the hold on human sympathies obtained by the personal interposition of the Lawgiver, and by the bestowal of direct spiritual aid. There is little remarkable in this portion of the book, except that the writer altogether avoids theological technicalities, and softens down the Evangelical aspect of man's future even to the verge of ultimate universal salvation—against which doctrine, however, he offers a protest, founded on what his present biographer deems a misconception of its character and influence. It is when Irving escapes out of the straits of unnatural, theologic dilemmas, into the open sea of morality and spiritualism, that his heart and fancy seem in their native element. Happily, the reader has never long to wait for these occasions: they are very much more frequent than these citations can represent. Here follow two such passages, describing the effect upon the soul of conscious reconciliation to God, through Christ:—'She is comforted on each of the three sides on which she toucheth the existing world; the past, the present, and the future. She is left at ease from chiding memory and biting remorse; the unpaid accounts of former years being discharged; and no distress nor execution awaiteth her in the future, to scare her from that quarter of thought. She can ruminate over the past, to learn lessons of her own infirmity and her Maker's mercy; over the future she can range, in the anticipation of progressive purity and blessedness. The whole aspect and economy of time cometh to be changed. The past, which upbraided, and the future, which threatened,

The soul comforted for time and eternity.

drove her with desperation to seize the present, and empty its cupful of enjoyment, come what might. Now, the past, which instructeth her musings, and the future, which feedeth her joyful hopes, ween the soul from the present, which was wont to absorb her wholly, and she is enabled to deal fairly by the three provinces of time. The fierceness of passion and pleasure, craving for instant possession, ceaseth to scorch up the faculties of thought and purpose. Coolness of reflection, calmness of purpose, and patience of hope, cast their mild light in upon the soul, like the beams of the morning through our casement; rousing us from the lethargy of farther indulgence, and guiding forth our footsteps to the healthful labours of life. . . . She cometh to know that this God, whom she fancied hidden in secret, sits displayed on every visible object; that this God, whom she had placed remote from her concerns, is full of carefulness over her welfare, and of promise for every want and enjoyment of her being—that He hath made a promise for the bread which we eat, and for the raiment wherein we are clothed; for the rain which watereth the earth, and for the dew which maketh the outgoings of the morning to rejoice; that His bow in the heavens is a promise of seed-time and harvest to endure for the nourishment of everything that lives; that He holdeth the gifts of knowledge, and understanding, and a sound mind, in His hand, and serveth them out to men; that power is his, and length of days, and riches, and honour. All these regions, which aforetime floated in our mind as the domain of fickle fortune, or were given into the hands of a fixed

fate, or made dependent on the agency and freewill of man, turn out, upon knowing the promises of God, to be administrations of His bounty for sustaining the world and comforting its afflicted state; remnants of is creation gifts, which He did not remove at the great forfeiture of all our estate, but secured for ever, as divine attachments to hold us to Himself, against the great current of sin which drifteth all things into the cold and frozen regions where God is forgotten and unknown. Thus fortune, and fate, and human power, and every adventure and change in human life, become hung and suspended from the throne of God, so soon as we comprehend the revelations of the Almighty's purposes. *The atheism of human thought, and the godlessness of human action*, pass away; and, in their stead, come a knowledge of the Divine nature, and a confidence in the Divine promises. The blankness and blackness of the future become enlivened with holy light. Footing is found for the bright daughters of Hope to clear the way, that warm wishes and constant purposes may follow after. . . .

'Then cometh into view the end and consummation of His love, the fulness of future glory, worthy, and alone worthy, to follow such a procession of creation, and providence, and grace, the three visible kingdoms of the Almighty's bounty. This body—the seed-bed of pains and diseases, the nurse of appetites and passions strong—shall be renovated, most glorious to behold, most durable, most sweetly compacted, and yielding most exquisite sensations of bliss. This society, so rife with deceivers, betrayers, and slanderers, and

workers of mischief, shall be winnowed of all its chaff, and constituted anew under God's own government; when shall be conjoined such intimacies and loving unions, as will put to the blush friendship, and love, and brotherhood, and every terrestrial affinity. And the soul, which here doth peep and feel about the surface of things, shall then dive into all the mysteries of knowledge. And intuition shall see, far and near, the essences of all created things. And all intelligence shall fan flames of benevolence, and feed eternal purposes of well-doing to every creature within our reach. All heaven shall smile for us; and for us every neighbouring creature shall labour, and we for them; and angels with the sons of men shall exchange innocent love; and the creatures under man shall serve him with love, and drink from him their joy, as we drink our joy from the service of God. Oh! who shall tell the glory of those new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. . . . All language is a pale reflexion of thought; all thought a pale reflexion of present sensation; and all sensation this world hath ever generated, a sickly, faint idea of what shall be generated hereafter in the soul and body of man.'

The observant reader may be asking, *Where* is the 'hereafter,' the description of which so much more resembles a picture of earthly perfectness than of celestial existence? We will, however, only register the question, and proceed to the pleader's summing up of this part of his argument:—'I do solemnly pledge myself to keep the field, against all the devices of moralists and legislators for the elevation of human

nature, in defence of this divine constitution; whereby that delight which the mind hath in exact equity, is satisfied; whereby all the good that accrues to the individual, or the commonwealth, from the obedience of wholesome law, is secured; whereby all pure sentiments are indulged, all enthusiasm of the heart awakened, all tender affections full blown, all noble desires drawn out, all soft and exquisite graces of demeanour patronized, all stern and unbending virtues upheld; whereby, to crown all, anticipation is allowed to steep his wings in the bliss of heaven, and Time runs posting onward to his grave, driving before him to their graves all cares, troubles, weaknesses, and sorrows; whence eternity awaketh, as girt about with beauty and with strength, to fill up the measure and duration of heaven.'

Part the Fourth is entitled by the writer 'Digression.' It is, however, more strictly an expansion of the argument upon the adaptation of the divine law to produce individual and social advantages. It might be passed over, if this were a mere abstract of Edward Irving's theological opinions, and of his reasonings in their defence—but it must not be overlooked in a biography of his characteristic and most influential utterances. For such a performance, it is exceedingly rich in material. There are contained, within the sixty pages which it occupies, a greater number of passages, remarkable for fidelity to the perennial facts of human nature, for graphic painting of social conditions, for vigourous and beautiful expression of physical or spiritual phenomena, than I have found, within a similar space, in the writings of any modern man, except, perhaps, Thomas Carlyle. It

happens, however, that these passages are they which were most frequently quoted by both admiring and censorious critics; and they may be more conveniently introduced when we come to review the reviewers. We will quote here only the concluding paragraph:—

A God-governed commonwealth.

'I know not whether my subject beguiles me, but I have often seemed, while writing these pages, to see, with the eye of my mind, the purest state of society resulting from the universal adoption of Christian rules. More virtuous and invincible than the republic of Sparta; more polished and active than Athens; more free and wise than England; and more happy than Araby the Blest, or the fabled islands of the Western Main. I see kings ruling in righteousness in the hearts of a free and happy people; I see judges ceasing from their function for want of accusers, and prisons open for want of criminals. I see the streets without watchmen by night or by day; houses undefended by bolt or bar; vestal purity reigning in the foulest quarters of the city; justice running down the streets like a stream, and judgment like a mighty torrent. I see the people —love in every eye, and concord in every sound, and manly freedom in every step—moving to and fro about their labours; recreating themselves with innocent sports; dwelling in peace at home, and training up a virtuous and holy progeny for the services of the state. And statesmen, I see, debating of justice and equity, and national happiness; and learned men, teaching the people to be virtuous and holy; and discoverers cheering their imaginative spirits to research, by the high motives of God's glory and the commonweal. And

the soldiers, who keep the batties from the gates, every one of them a mighty man of valour, terrible only to the terrible, and soft as childhood to the needy and oppressed. And what more shall I say, of the complete happiness of a society thoroughly governed by the laws of Christ, than what the prophet hath written of these latter days, when the rod out of the stem of Jesse shall come forth. "With righteousness shall he judge the poor,"' etc., etc. (Isah. xi, 4-9.)

The manner of the last judgment.

In treating of 'doubts and difficulties concerning the general judgment,' the writer wisely disembarrasses himself of whatever is physical or mechanical, 'content to preserve the spirit of the transaction.' 'If I were to venture an opinion upon the manner of the action, it would be this—that it will take place, not by a successive summons of each individual, and a successive inquisition of his case, but by an instantaneous separation of the two classes, the one from the other. Nor do I fancy to myself the bodily presence of any judge, or the utterance by his lips of vocal sounds, although it be so written, any more than I fancy a loud voice to have been uttered by the Eternal for the light to come forth at first, or any other part of the material universe to arise into being. But I rather think it to be more congenial to the other works of God, when it is imagined that these souls, and the bodies rëcreated for their use, will be planted, without knowing how, each class in the abodes prepared for them; and that they will not be consulted about the equity of the measure. God will leave them to find out the rectitude of the

proceeding, as He left us to find out the rectitude of His proceeding at the Fall. . . . The thing came about by moral laws of being, older than the creation —yea, old as the eternal existence of God. And, in the same manner, by laws of being equally old and sure, will come about the opening of paradise again to the righteous, and the barring of hope and happiness to the wicked. When the end of all things hath come, and the renovation of all things hath taken place, I reckon that the bodies of men will start from their unconscious state of dispersion and demolition, as the materials of Adam's body came at first from their secret and various places, or as the earth teemed out her various tribes; and that the soul will come from its intermediate sojourn, as Adam's soul came, no one knoweth whence, and be united to her ancient comrade. So, that the moment the sleep of death is broken by the trump of God, we shall find ourselves, each one ere we wis, with the paradise of heaven overshadowing our heads, or the pavement of hell glowing beneath our feet.'

But the essence of the difficulty is moral, not physical. How shall we become conscious of the justice of the divine decision? That question is thus forcibly put by the writer, on behalf of a supposed objector:—'Life, even with the aids of revelation, is an intricate affair; and the best guided are often in perplexity; while, without revelation, it is a matter almost of hap-hazard whether we go right or wrong. Custom, over the origin of which we had no control—opinions, which we found bearing the world

The assent of the judged to their doom.

before them—misgovernment of rulers, lashing subjects into madness—weary toil, consuming the time and very faculty of thought—stormy passions within the heart—gross darkness without, covering the very age and place of our nativity; these things mastered us (as whom can they not master?); and these pleas we have a right to be heard on, otherwise that judgment of yours is a mass of inequity, and a medley of confusion.' And to the objection so forcibly put, that its magnitude is admitted, this reply is given—a reply alike ingeniously conceived and eloquently expressed:

Death the perfecting of memory.

—'The first thing I perceive in death, is, the great change it will make in enhancing the past and future over the present. I think it will go hard to annihilate the present altogether. In our present condition, things that are past are spoken of as dead, or out of existence; and things that are to come are spoken of as unborn; and things present, alone, as being in real existence. But this popular way of conceiving and speaking is not according to truth. For things when they are past are not dead to us, but live and act upon our condition in a thousand ways. They live in memory, and go to compose all our knowledge, and experience, and wisdom; they affect us with repentance and remorse, or with joy and self-complacency, according to their character of good or ill; they prepare us for the present by the habits which they engender, and for the future by the resolutions to which they give birth. Neither are future events, though unborn to sense, without life or influence over the mind. They already live in hope and fear,

and desire and schemes ; they cause the largest share of our anxiety and arrangements, and determine the better part of our happiness or misery. The soul is spread out both behind and before, and with its wings stretcheth both ways into time, and struggleth hard to compass the round orb of eternity. It is an error, therefore, both in conception and language, to speak of the present as the only period actually existing before the soul ; it is the only period actually existing before the *senses*. . . . and our senses carry such a weight in the empire of the mind, being its five great intelligences with the outward world, that they have deluded her into the notion that they are the five elements of her existence. . . . With a true man, the present is prizable only as it cometh out of the womb of past anticipation, bringing things hoped for to hand, and as it may be wrought into the tissue of our schemes for well developing the future.

'Now, you are prepared to understand how it will be with man, when he is disembodied. The body, which containeth the senses, lies mouldering in the grave. . . . The link is broken and rusted away, which joined the soul to the enjoyments, or troubles, of the present world. No new material investments are given to her, whereby to move again in the midst of these material things ; no eye, nor ear, nor wakeful sense, by which intrusion may come, as heretofore, into the chambers of her consciousness. Till the resurrection, she shall be disunited ; and then, being rejoined by her former companions, they shall be submitted to material scenes, again to suffer and enjoy. . . .

There are no sensations, nor pursuits, to take her off from self-knowledge and self-examination. In Peter's emphatical language, she is in prison ("Jesus went and preached to the spirits in prison"); that is, she hath no power of travelling out amongst things, but is shut up to her own remembrances, thoughts, and anticipations. . . Oh Conscience! what a cheat thou art! How thou allowest thyself to be laid asleep by present sensations of delight, and then risest upon us in secret, in all thy gloomy strength! Thou art cowardly, for thou takest us alone and in darkness. Thou art treacherous, for thou forsakest thy post to the enemy. Thou art weak, for thou standest us in no stead in our necessity. Wouldest that thou didst either take us, or let us alone; either give us up to enjoyment, and trouble us not with thine afterthoughts, or else take us to thyself, and make us what thou art ever harping upon us to become!'

Conscience at work with recollection.

'Then, I truly ween, there will be a scrutiny, and a self-arraignment, more severe than hath ever passed in monkish cell or hermit's cave. The soul will unfold the leaves of her experience, which, since they were engraven, had never before been turned out to her inspection. The glorious colours which illumined them are gone; the pomp, the vanity, the applause, the sensual joy; there is nothing left but the blank and bare engraving upon the tablet; and conscience is its severe interpreter, not worldly interest, ambition, or folly; and there is no companionship of fellows or masters in wickedness to keep us in heart; and there is no hope of amendment

to chasten self-accusation, no voice of consolation, no preaching of recovery, no sound of salvation: all is blank solitude, spiritual nakedness, stark necessity, and changeless fate. The soul must have an irksome time of it, if so be that she hath lent no ear to the admonition of her better part, or to the counsels of God which sustaineth them. It affrights me, while I write, to think of it! I ask no torments, such as our immortal poet hath imagined for the disembodied spirit.* . . Neither do I ask the Inferno of the father of modern poetry, with its seven circles of punishment, downwards to the centre, according to the heinousness of crime. These fancies I give to the poet and the orator; and guiding myself in this difficult subject by what light reason can derive from observing the present habitudes of the soul, I say again, it affrights me, while I write, to think of the souls of the wicked in their disembodied state.'

Love in action the touchstone of character.

To illustrate the conditions of the judgment, whose necessity and fitness he has thus defended, and the process of which he has thus imagined, the writer selects Christ's own description of what is usually understood to be the universal assize of souls—that is, the discourse recorded in the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew's gospel. The Lord represents the everlasting destiny of the righteous or wicked, as being determined respectively by their past treatment of Him, in the persons of His disciples: 'I was a hungered . . . I was thirsty . . . I was a stranger . . . naked . . . sick . . . in prison.' These

* Measure for Measure. Act iii—scene 1.

six sorrows, it is ingeniously shown, stand for all the necessities and sufferings of humanity—constitute the entire orb of calamity, and the circumference of benevolent action; and that a man's behavour in these six zones of earthly condition, is the unmistakeable expression of his disposition. And that hereon the issues of irrevocable doom are made to rest, the writer applauds, as every way advantageous to the interest of goodness. Of this test—he exclaims—there can be neither evasion nor counterfeit. That it is a perfect and complete test, he maintains by its comparison with other possible methods of determining desert. 'Had He placed it in forms of belief, then every clear-headed student of His Word, who could logically extract the bearings of its various propositions, would have come off glorious, whatever had been the state of his affections or his morals. And no one but he could have come gloriously off: so that the busy multitude, who have not time accurately to try conclusions of doctrine; and the unlettered, who have not learning to consult the faculties and bodies of theological lore; and the unintellectual, who have not sufficient depth of mind to fathom their mysteries; and the wise, who have more sense than to meddle with their vain and and profitless jinglings—would all have been excluded for the sake of some few headstrong persecuting dogmatists. *I, for one, feel most truly happy and contented in my own mind, that, upon whatever future destiny is made to turn, it is not upon a refined or finical creed.* Had it been made to turn upon what are called frames of the inner man, or evanescent feelings of the mind, then I know not what a rabble of

devotees and self-deluded enthusiasts would have rushed forward in the greatness of their self-confidence. You would have had them, from the cell of the crazed with religious dreams, and from the gloomy chambers of the fanatic; you would have had persecuting prelates and infuriated inquisitors, all pleading the holy convictions of their minds. Every dreamer, every visionary, every self-deluded prophet, would have come, and every towering confidant of God, and pharasaical judge of his fellow. The whole catalogue of severe monastics, who lived on remote and retired communion, and built presumption upon the intoxication of self-consequence, which their solitude and seclusion wrought within them—all would have come, claiming upon their deranged conceptions, and fancied communions with God. But as it is, the test reduces itself to that which alone can evince the reality of belief, measure the worth of service, and interpret the truth of feelings; namely, the trouble and the trial which we did undergo for Him whom we profess to believe in, and to sacrifice to, and to feel for.'

The adaptation of this test to the determination of religious character, is further shown by an application of it to the experience of modern men of various classes—to the men of rank or intellect, so apt to scorn the poor and vulgar good; to the men of trade, whose superiority to conventional honesty is counted to be libellous or hypocritical. It is then defended against 'two erroneous strains of feeling with respect to it; the one, prevalent within the Church—the other, without.' The former clause of this sentence refers,

of course, to the long-lived controversy between faith and works. Our divine shuns this dispute, whensoever it crosses his path, with a sort of shrinking contempt—contenting himself with little more than a protest that he does not preach salvation by self-righteousness; but pouring indignant scorn on the preaching of faith without works, or of salvation by Divine grace alone. In this place, he introduces, for the reprobation of that which obtained in his time as 'Evangelical preaching,' one of the finest and best sustained pieces of imagery to be found in all his writings—perhaps, to be found in any prose writing since that in which Milton pleaded for 'the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing:'—'I greatly fear that this modern contraction of the Gospel into the space of one or two ideas—this promulgating of it as if it were a drawling monotone of sweetness, a lullaby for a baby spirit, with no music of a mighty feeling, nor swells of grandeur, nor declensions of deepest pathos, nor thrilling themes of terror; as if it were a thing for a shepherd's love-sick lute, or a sentimentalist's Æolian harp, instead of being for *the great organ of human thought and feeling, through all the stops and pipes of this various world*;—I say, I greatly fear lest this strain of preaching Christ, the most feeble and ineffectual which the Christian world hath ever heard, should have lulled many into a quietus of the soul, under which they are resting sweetly from searching inquiry into their personal estate, and will pass, composedly, through death unto the awful judgment.'

A beautiful similitude.

In Part the Seventh (on 'the issues of the judgment'), the writer returns to those more imaginative than philosophical or scriptural, yet most awful themes—heaven and hell. Every thoughtful, serious reader must yield his sympathies to Irving in this attempt to rescue those great themes from the profane hands of self-degraded, because indevout, genius, and of witlings who, aspiring to the throne of the genius, attained only to the seat of the scoffer. And grateful, as well as sympathetic, will be the reader who, deeming religion deeply dishonoured by the employment of human law on her behalf, observes that Irving was, in part, moved to this task by disgust at the 'prosecutions for blasphemy' which abounded in his time. But few, I apprehend, can read without pain the pages in which Irving lavishes his wealth of imagery and language in the endeavour to move the children of Time by considerations drawn from an Eternal Future. For me, it would be intolerably painful to witness—as in these pages I do—a great intellect and generous heart labouring, with feeble logic, to establish a pitiless conclusion, if I did not foresee that the reasoner will survive his conclusions. Irving's pictures of the perfect bliss awaiting perfected goodness, are indeed enchanting: they loose—to me, at least—none of their supernal beauty by their being painted in the hues of earth; they lack nothing of substance from the possible inconclusiveness of the reasoning on which they are suspended; they are so beautiful, the heart attests their truth. But side by side with them lie tableaux of suffering—yea, of what is

Representations of heaven and hell.

worse, of riotous wickedness, of evil unchecked, unmitigated, and inextinguishable—so horrible that the imagination sickens over them, and the moral sense refuses to hear the understanding in their defence. To speak plainly, Mr. Irving's representations of hell are such as I cannot feel it justice to his memory, or service to the cause of religion, to reproduce. True, he narrows down to an indefinably small number, the subjects of hopeless perdition. True, he extracts from their doom all coarse and needless agencies of torture, and is very careful to show that only themselves are to blame. But still there rests over the narrowed concave a cloud never to be rolled away, and there is heard from beneath ceaseless sounds of anguish and blasphemy. By insisting that only those to whom a perfect moral law is distinctly presented, will be judged by that law —that not transgression, but impenitence, will be the cause of final abandonment—that it is perfectly within the power of man to apprehend God in Scripture, and to lay hold on Christ the Saviour—that the predominance of evil, not its presence, will condemn to exclusion from all remedial influences—and that punishment will not so much be inflicted, as permitted to work out—by insisting on these qualifications of the popular theology, the apologist for 'Judgment to Come' tries to shut up the reader face to face with his own possible future; and then intensifies the horror of that future by a pencil dipped in the deepest woes of human experience, and taught by the dreadest creations of human imagination. My own conviction is—apart from the 'doctrinal' difference I have, at this point, from the writer—that the

mark is overshot; that the minds to which these terrible delineations are presented, must either rush into frenzy, or recoil in sceptical dismay. I will therefore transcribe only from those portions of the concluding Parts of the 'Argument,' in which the writer was inspired by his better genius; and as space rapidly contracts, those selections must be limited to two or three paragraphs.

'Of how many cheap exquisite joys are our five senses the inlets! and who is he that can look upon the beautiful scenes of the morning, lying in the freshness of the dew, and the joyful light of the risen sun, and not be happy? Cannot God create another world many times more fair? and cast over it a mantle of light many times more lovely? and wash it with purer dew than ever dropped from the eyelids of the morning? Can He not shut up Winter in his hoary caverns, or send him howling over another domain? Can He not form the crystal eye more full of sweet sensations, and fill the soul with a richer faculty of conversing with nature, than the most gifted poet did ever possess? Think you the creative function of God is exhausted upon this dark and troublous ball of earth, or that this body and soul of human nature are the masterpiece of His architecture? Who knows what new enchantments of melody, what new witchery of speech, what poetry of conception, what variety of design, and what brilliancy of execution, He may endow the human faculties withal: in what new graces He may clothe nature, with such various enchantment of hill and dale,

Creative power not exhausted.

woodland, gushing stream, and living fountain; with bowers of bliss, and Sabbath scenes of peace, peopled by a thousand forms of disporting creatures; so as to make all which the world hath beheld seem like the gross pictures with which you catch infants—all which the rapt imagination of eastern poets hath conceived, seem like the ignorant prattle and rude structures which first delight our childhood, and afterwards ashame our riper years?'

Nor the capacity of human enjoyment.

'Again, from our present establishment of affections, what exquisite enjoyment springs of love, of friendship, and of domestic life! In each one of which, God, amidst this world's faded glories, hath preserved many a temple of most exquisite delight. Home, that word of nameless charms; love, that inexhaustible theme of sentiment and poetry; all relationships, parental, conjugal, and filial, shall arise to a new strength, graced with innocency, undisturbed by apprehension of decay, unruffled by jealously, and unweakened by time. Heart shall meet heart,

"Each other's pillow to repose divine."

The tongue shall be eloquent to disclose all its burning emotions; no longer labouring and panting for utterance. And a new organization of body for joining and mixing affections, may be invented, more quiet homes for partaking it undisturbed, and more sequestered retreats for barring out the invasion of other affairs. What scenes of social life I fancy to myself in the settlements of the blessed, one day of which I would

not barter against the greatness and glory of an Alexander or a Cæsar! What new friendships, what new ties of affection, what urgency of well-doing, what promotion of good, what elevation of the whole sphere in which we dwell, till everything smile in "Eden's first bloom," and the angels of light, as they come and go, tarry with innocent rapture over the enjoyment of every happy creature!'

Heaven the perfection of both.

'I cannot think of heaven otherwise than as the perfection of every good thing which my mind conceiveth; the fulfilment of every pious purpose, the gratification of every devout wish, and the perfection of this unfinished creature which I feel myself to be. I hope this body will not fail, as now it doth, and languish, and stop short of the energetic purposes of the mind. I hope that the instruments of thought within the brain will not grow numb, and refuse obedience to the will; and that the fountains of feeling in the heart will not subside, and dry up, when called upon too much. I hope that time will open its narrow gates, and admit a thousand acts and processes which it now strangleth in the narrowness of its porch. And I would fain add the wings of the morning, that I might travel with the speed of thought to the seats of my affections, and gratify them without constraint. And oh! I hope that in heaven the instability of virtue will be removed, and that there may be no common-place talk about the golden mean; but that the heart may drink deep, and not be intoxicated with its affections—the head think on, and not be wearied with its cogitations. And

I hope there will be no narrowness of means, no penury, no want; and that benevolence will be no more racked with inability to bestow. And I know there will be no more death, decay, nor dissolution; no strife, warfare, nor contention; no evil to hurt in all the holy mountain of the Lord.'

Irving's poetic contemporaries.

The reader will have noted more than one allusion, in the foregoing pages, to the preacher's great poetic contemporary, the author of 'Childe Harold,' of 'Cain,' and of the 'Vision of Judgment.' It was, probably, this last-mentioned production—itself, it will be remembered, the mocking offspring of Southey's poem of the same name—that suggested to Irving the subject of his 'Argument.' We have seen that he sets out with a defiant glance at 'poetical visionaries.' We must not omit to mention that he characterizes, incidentally, the former of these two poems as 'a brazen-faced piece of political cant;' the other, as 'an abandoned parody of solemn judgment.' To this reprobation of Southey's profane sycophancy, and of Byron's irreverent satire, followed a rebuke of Moore's licentiousness. Nor did the censor stay there. With a strange forgetfulness of the bard whom he soon after came to know, reverence, and love—and of many meaner, but not unworthy, minstrels—it was declared, that, since Milton, only one of the poetic tribe had tuned the lyre to his God. The excepted was Wordsworth, whose genius was then appreciated over only a narrow circle. Irving was as courageous in eulogy as in censure, and as unstinted. In the recapitulatory section of the 'Argument,' he thus lauds

the poet of Windermere (the application of the introductory sentences will be easily discerned):—

'Here it was that we began to feel the limitation of our powers. We had to forsake the realms of light, and to carry the vision of our mind into the obscure of the middle state: we felt a light and a shadow upon our thoughts; they stood not constantly; they came by glimpses; and when we sought to write them down, they were gone. Whether, if thinking men should ever be conditioned again as the ancient sages were—meditating and musing like Pythagoras in the deep groves of Crotona; or like Plato, sending from the sacred promontory of Sunium his speculations abroad into boundless space—whether, in that case, they might not, by the new aids of revelation, cast upon these unseen dwellings of the disembodied spirit some light of certain understanding, I do not know; but while they thus live and act under ten thousand invasions, buried in sensual gratifications, or floating amongst ambitious vanities, and courting earthly distinctions, seeking chariots and horses, and costly abodes, and delicious entertainments, it is vain to think that either poet, or philosopher, or divine, will make any invasion upon these unredeemed provinces of thought, or even follow the flights which the more pure and self-denied spirits of former ages have taken. There is one man in these realms who hath addressed himself to such a primitive life, and dwelt alone amidst the grand and lovely scenes of nature, and the deep unfathomable secrecies of human thought. Would to

An aspiration for philosophic leisure.

Wordsworth's an enviable though unhonoured life.

Heaven it were allowed to others to do likewise! And he hath been rewarded with many new cogitations of nature and nature's God; and he hath heard in the stillness of his retreat, many new voices of his conscious spirit—all which he hath sung in harmonious numbers. But mark the Epicurean soul of this degraded age! They have frowned on him; they have spit on him; they have grossly abused him. The masters of this critical generation (like generation, like masters) have raised the hue and cry against him; the literary and sentimental world, which is their sounding-board, have reverberated it; and every reptile who can retail an opinion in print, hath spread it, and given his reputation a shock from which it is slowly but surely recovering. All for what? For making nature and his own bosom his home, and daring to sing of the simple and sublime truths which were revealed to him; for daring to be free in his manner of uttering genuine feeling, and depicting natural beauty, and grafting thereon devout and solemn contemplations of God. Had he sent his Cottage Wanderer forth upon an "Excursion" amongst courts and palaces, battle-fields, and scenes of faithless gallantry, his musings would have been more welcome, being far deeper and tenderer than those of "the heartless Childe;" but because the man hath valued virtue, and retiring modesty, and common household truth, over these ephemeral decorations or excessive depravities of our condition, therefore he is hated and abused! All which I go aside to mention, in order to find, for the cloudy indistinctness of those preliminary thoughts of

Judgment, some apology in the active bustling spirit of this age, and especially of this my city profession, of which every individual is, in some measure, the slave, and of which slavery I feel too much the influence.'

Not unneeded were these apologetic confessions; for to repeated and thoughtful perusals of this volume, its hurried inequality and other artistic defects have become unwelcomely conspicuous. But an author is usually more conscious, I believe, than his keenest critics, of his own defects; and the sincerity of Irving's acknowledgments of imperfection could scarcely be doubted, even if they were not embodied in a prayer for Divine grace to anneal the author and supplement his work. And if there be any to whom the solemnest words are but a rhetorical artifice, even he may relent into admiration of the man whose good-will to his fellows bursts out into this artless aspiration:—

Confessions and aspirations.

'I wish I had a dwelling-place in every bosom, and could converse with every faculty of man —that I had an ear to hear their murmurings, their sighings, their groanings, and all their separate griefs; and I wish that I had a faculty to understand all the parts and kindly offices of religion which, in this present age, seemeth to be in bonds, and to want enlargement; then would I draw near to every repining, grieving, hampered, faculty of every spirit, and out of my spiritual guide I would sing over it a soft and soothing strain, sweetly set to its melancholy mood, and aptly fitted to its present infirmity, until each languishing part of human

nature should be refreshed, and peace should come, and blushing health arise, and glowing strength spring up hastily, and, like a strong man from sleep, or a giant refreshed with wine, recover a divine strength, and push onwards to perfection, heartily and happily, with the full consent of all her powers.'

Whatever is essential to this 'Argument' is now of universal acceptance. The atheism that denied human responsibility is extinct. Upon its philosophy, men differ much as ever—but the fact none dispute. If we are not accountable to a personal judge, it is certain that we are amenable to moral law. And that the former doctrine is a useful auxiliary, if not a necessary supplement, to the latter, few will question. He, therefore, who undertakes, as Irving did, to call off the thoughts of men from the allurements of the senses to the consideration of this great spiritual reality, deserves the respect of all virtuous intelligences—and he who, in executing this design, employed, as Irving did, undeniably, a novel method, well-adapted reasoning, and much of beautiful speech, is surely entitled to applause from the official guardians of religion and literature, whatever the necessity for exceptional criticism. Whether applause, or even respect, was duly rendered, the reader shall now judge.

CHAPTER V.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

THE first announcement of the 'Orations and Argument' appears in the daily newspapers of July the 2nd, 1823. That was by no means a dull season with journalists, and 'The Times' was then but 'a folio of four pages.' There were nearly every night long and hot debates in Parliament—for Canning had lately returned to office, and Henry Brougham was taunting him with political infidelity, and the right honourable gentleman giving his accuser the lie direct. The Duc D'Angoulème was marching into Spain, and the 'patriots' were raising men and money in London. The Greeks were fighting for independence, and Mackintosh making eloquent speeches in their aid at the Freemason's Tavern. Prince Hohenloe was working miracles in Ireland. Lord Byron was publishing his last, worst poem; and 'Thomas Little' shooting his flame-tipped arrows right and left under cover of the broad sheet. Nevertheless, editors immediately made room in their columns

The newspapers in July, 1823.

for the new comer; and for many days an extract from the 'Orations' might be seen side by side with despatches from the seat of war, or a canto of 'Don Juan.'

'The Times.'

'The Times' fell upon the pulpit celebrity in its capacity of general guardian of the public taste. There appeared, one July morning, an article commencing—'There is a fashion in everything—in wigs and bonnets, in poetry and novel writing; and lastly, in actors and preachers; and while things go on in the ordinary way—while wigs do not accumulate their curls into periwigs, nor bonnets swell into coal-scuttles—while our popular poets scribble only one poem, and our popular romancers only two novels, a year—while our actors are content with one new reading in a play of Shakspeare, and our preachers aim at no praises beyond those of the regular frequenters at fashionable chapels—we are disposed to let things pass, and allow the candid and enlightened public to have their own way. But the case is different with Mr. Irving. His popularity absolutely frightens us "from our propriety." We learn that statesmen and quack doctors, old ladies and judges, young ladies and students at law, all flock with equal eagerness to hear the Caledonian orator. We become somewhat anxious to know what are the attractions to collect together such an heterogeneous mass; and, after a serious consideration, we profess ourselves unable to discover. After hearing him, and after reading what he has written, we are, in our own minds, fully convinced that he is a man of very ordinary talents; that his

understanding is weak in its grasp, and limited in its observation; and that his taste is of the very lowest order of badly-instructed school-boys. He is an imitator of Dr. Chalmers, but no more like his prototype than the inflated frog in the fable was like the bull whom he strove to resemble: for the energy of thought of his original, he gives us nothing but rumbling and distorted common-places; for the impressive and impassioned diction of his master, we have nothing but antitheses without point, and epithets without distinctness; while the poor and insignificant idea, wrapped up in a heap of tinsel and clumsy phraseology, looks like "the lady in a lobster, or a mouse under a canopy of state." . . . We feel ashamed, and begin to distrust our own judgment, when we see that we have one idea in common with such a turgid and shallow declaimer. . . Surely, surely it cannot be long before this bubble bursts!' The writer, or some 'alter ego,' went to the Caledonian Church on the following Sunday morning—with the pious and modest design of observing whether or not the 'bubble' had burst immediately at the Thunderer's touch; but has to inform us in his Monday's paper—over a paragraph from the court newsman, stating that the Duchess of Kent, and a dozen or so of the nobility, yesterday attended the Caledonian Church—that himself was among the crowded out; and that 'the once celebrated' Mr. Romeo Coates, being in the same predicament, discoursed from a window against *him*, and in eulogy of 'Dr. Irving.'

There was then in existence a daily paper called 'The New Times;' and this print, differing at all points from its elder brother, vehemently eulogised the Scottish orator. 'The Morning Chronicle,' more moderately, but warmly, praised him. 'The Examiner'—then conducted by Leigh Hunt, and stigmatised by its political opponents as infidel—was liberal in applause. Indeed, besides 'The Times,' unqualified hostility was displayed by none of the newspaper press but 'John Bull' and 'Cobbet's Register'—the former foully vituperating, in prose and verse, preacher and hearer, as was its wont to do all innovators in Church or State; the latter, scowling upon every trait of religious earnestness and intellectual refinement with the writer's characteristic coarseness.

The 'Quarterly' and 'Westminster' Reviews.

The reviewers of all ranks pronounced their judgments upon the author with a promptitude that indicated prior acquaintance with the preacher. Some of the lighter magazines 'sketched' the orator in preference to reviewing his book, and all treated it as a question of pulpit eloquence. 'The Quarterly' refused 'to recognize as the champion of our faith, a reasoner so vague and inconsistent—a declaimer so turgid and unintelligible—a writer so coarse and incorrect.' 'The Westminster'—commencing its career as an organ of free-thinking in religion, and radicalism in politics—set out with the dictum, 'Mr. Irving is a man of extraordinary talents, who, either from an undue hankering after premature fame, or from the solicitations of misjudging friends, has been induced to put forth a most

unequal work;' but ascribes the inequality to no worse influences than dogmatism and indiscretion. In a single sentence, this writer indicated what is now for the first time attempted, after the lapse of thirty-three years:—'We are persuaded, that a selection might be made from this volume, furnishing a cento of brilliant and most forcible passages, which should be equal in strength, in warmth, and in all the qualities which commend themselves to the heart of man, to any similar collection which could be made from the same number of sermons of any divine, antiquated or modern.'

The 'Religious' reviewer.

The religious periodicals—'The Pulpit' to wit—were, for the most part, very severe, both upon the sentiments and style of the volume: indeed, it is significant—though, to one who has had any experience of the 'religious world,' not startling—that, with the exception of Cobbett, Mr. Irving's fierce assailants were all champions of orthodoxy and 'order.'

Mr. Irving's 'Trial.'

Controversy on the qualities of the 'Orations' and their author, was not stayed even when the tri-monthly reviewers had done their office. Pamphlets followed, *pro* and *con*; and the salient sayings of the whole were gathered into a clever and not unfriendly *brochure*, entitled, 'The Trial of the Rev. Edward Irving: a Cento of Criticism.' In this amusing performance, the idea of a judicial process is well sustained. The plaintiff is represented as the Rev. Jacob Oldstyle, clerk, and the defendant is assisted by that most florid even of forensic orators, Mr. Charles Phillipps. 'The galleries of the court,'

we are told, 'were almost entirely filled with elegantly dressed ladies, admitted by tickets from the lady patronesses of Almack's: all its best blood was there.' We have then a list of spectators on the floor, including all the celebrities and notorieties of that day, and many whose eminence has not proved ephemeral. Among the witnesses called for the prosecution, is Mr. Barnes, of 'The Times,' from whom the defendant's counsel extorts the fact, that he had pronounced Scott 'a writer of no imagination,' and Byron 'destitute of all poetical talent.' Mr. Irving makes his defence in passages from his book, ingeniously put together. A profound impression is said to have been made upon the auditory. And, of all the seven counts of the indictment, only on one—that charging 'divisive-mindedness,' or uncharitable innovation—is the verdict for the plaintiff.*

Doubtless, one of the passages to which the writer in the 'Westminster' referred, and certainly one which obtained most frequent applause—partly, perhaps, in the case of the secular critics, from the generous tenderness of the concluding sentence—was the following:—

The social influences of religion.

'Religion would bring back with it all the social and generous virtues which once dwelt within the land, and restore the efflorescence of happiness which hath almost faded away.

* The copy of this once widely-circulated report of a then famous case, from which I have drawn the above abstract, is contained in a volume of Facetiæ which happens also to contain a very clever satire on the gentle craft of criticism—so often abused by authors, themselves almost as invariably combining both functions. 'Advice to Young Reviewers' is full of instructions as intelligible as candid in the art of torturing a writer's sense to your own purpose; and supplies for example, a magazine article which makes 'L'Allegro' dull and immoral, and Milton a poetic aspirant who had far better remain a scrivener. Any of Mr. Irving's censors might have acted under the 'advice;' and perhaps some of them would not have strained at the 'example.'

It would wipe away the disgustful scenes into which their irrepressible freedom hurries the people. Sobriety, and economy, and domestic peace, it would plant in the families of the most dejected. The industry of parents would thrive, under the blessing of God, and the expectation of everlasting rest. The children would be trained in the fear of God; the young men would be strong in self-command; the young maidens clothed in modesty and chastity, and a divine gracefulness. Servants would be faithful, and masters kind; and within every cottage of the land would be realized that bower of innocency and paradise of religious content which our sorely tried, and alas! too yielding poet, hath sung in his 'Cotter's Saturday Night;' thereby redeeming half his frailties, and making the cause of religion his debtor—a debt, it seems to me, which, on the other hand, the religious have little thought of in their persecution of his name, and cruel exposure of his faults.'

Another much-quoted passage was the following. It occurs among the author's graphic descriptions of the social and moral disquietudes induced by neglect of the 'divine constitution':—

'Some, with most capacious minds, I have seen forced to grind, like Samson, in the mill of a haughty and imperious lord; others, with great and generous hearts, oppressed by cold poverty, or forced to hang upon common charity; the ambition of others I have seen land-locked and idle; the intellect of others exhausted upon sinister inventions; the wit of others upon winter evening tales;

Wasted or misdirected powers.

beauty blushing unseen, modesty uncared for, and royal virtues held in no repute: all which, their ill-assorted lots, did cost the people dear, and begat most indigestible and irritating humours. The mind seemed as in a cage of confining conditions, within whose narrow bounds it spent an unprofitable strength, pined like a proud man in prison, or raged like a strong man in fetters.' Words, alas! of perennial truth! Happy the age that had a voice to utter them!

The passage we shall next quote was the subject of unmeasured ridicule. The figure of Earth drinking the milk of existence from the Sun, was one of the standing gibes which Irving's unguarded composition afforded to his opponents. Nevertheless, a nobler summary of the silent potencies of Nature, I have nowhere read:—'Look abroad over the world, and what do you behold? Noiseless nature putting forth her buds, and drinking the milk of her existence from the distant sun. Where is God? He is not seen, he is not heard: where is the sound of His footsteps? where the rushing of His chariot wheels? where is His storehouse for this inhabited earth? Where are the germs of future plants, the juices of future fruits? and where is the hand dividing its portion to every living thing, and filling their hearts with life and joy? Lift your thoughts a little higher: behold the sun; doth he, when preparing to run his race, shake himself like a strong man after sleep, or make a rustling noise, and lift up his voice to God for a renewal of his exhausted strength? Doth the pale-faced and modest moon, which cometh forth

The invisible and silent powers.

in the season of the night, make music in the still silence to her Maker's praise? Do the stars, in their several spheres, tell to mortal men the wondrous story of their births? Again: turn your thoughts inward—upon yourselves, and say if your manly strength did grow out of infant helplessness with busy preparations and noisy workmanship, as the chiselled form of man groweth out of the quarried stone? In the still evening, when you lie down, wearied and worn-out, doth your strength return during the watches of the night by noise and trouble, as a worn-out machine is refitted by the cunning workman? Tell me how intelligence grows upon the unconscious babe? Where are the avenues of knowlege? and by what method doth it fix itself?'

Political sympathies and antipathies were obviously influential with the majority of the preacher's critics. His repeated and emphatic expressions of cordial goodwill to the nations then struggling for freedom from foreign or domestic oppression, though never involving a hint of partizanship, procured him distrust from one side, and at least passing favour from the other. The following passage was, probably, for this reason, no less than for its glowing recital of historic events, much quoted. It occurs in that section of the 'Argument' entitled 'Digression;' and succeeds to an exhibition of what Christianity did, as an element of social change, when first promulgated:—

'Our second instance is taken from the Reformation, when the divine constitution smote asunder religious and civil bonds, and let many nations free, as it were, at a single stride; in little more

Religion the ally of freedom.

than the life-time of a man, restoring England, Scotland, Holland, half of Germany, and the Scandinavian nations, to a free use of the faculty of thought, which ten centuries of cunning arts had been employed to shackle. The nations shook themselves, as from a sleep; the barbarous, ferocious people, took on piety and virtue, and the sacred sense of human rights. The Hollander roused him from his torpid life amongst his many marshes, and beat the chivalry of haughty Spain from his shores, defeating the conqueror of a new world. The German burgher braved his emperor, though followed by half the nations, and won back his religious rights. The English, under their virgin Queen, offered up the Armada, most glorious of navies, a sacrifice to the Lord of Hosts. And of my beloved native country—whose sufferings for more than a long century do place her in a station of honour second only to the Waldenses in the militant church, and whose martyrs (alas! that they should have been to Episcopal pride and Protestant intolerance!) will rank in the same file with those of Lyons and Alexandria in the primitive Church—of her regeneration by the power of religion, I can hardly trust myself to speak. Before that blessed era, she had no arts but the art of war; no philosophy; no literature, save her songs of love and chivalry; and little government of law. She was torn and mangled with intestine feuds; enslaved to arbitrary or aristocratic power, in vassalage or in turbulence. Her soil niggard; her climate stern—a desert land of misty lakes and hoary mountains. Yet no sooner did the breath of truth

from the living oracles of God breathe over her, than the wilderness and solitary plain became glad, and the desert rejoiced and blossomed like the rose. The high-tempered soul of the nation—the "ingenium perfervidum Scotorum"—which had roused itself heretofore to resist invasions of her sacred soil and spoil the invader's border, or to rear the front of rebellion and unloose warfare upon herself, did now arise for the cause of religion and liberty—for the rights of God, and for the rights of man. And oh! what a demonstration of magnanimity we made. The pastoral vales and upland heaths which, of old, were made melodious to the shepherd's lute, now rung responsive to the glory of God, attuned from the hearts of his persecuted saints. The blood of martyrs mingled with our running brooks; their hallowed bones now moulder in peace within their silent tombs, which are dressed by the reverential hands of the pious and patriotic people. And their blood did not cry in vain to heaven for vengeance. Their persecutors were despoiled; that guilty race of kings were made vagabonds upon the earth. The Church arose in her purity like a bride decked for the bridegroom; religious principles chose to reside within the troubled land; and they brought moral virtues in their train, and begat a national character for knowledge, and industry, and enterprise—for every domestic and public virtue, which maketh her children ever an acceptable people in the four quarters of the earth.'

By as many of the reviewers as were of what it is now the fashion to call 'the party of progress,' but

which might almost as properly be called the party of discontent and disparaging comparison, such sentences as these were eagerly caught up—though, certainly by some who thus retailed them, their spirit was very inadequately apprehended:—

'It seems to my mind, likewise, when I compare the writings of these patriarchs of Church and State with the irreverent and fiery speculations of modern politicians, and the monotonous, unimaginative dogmatizings of modern saints, that the soul of this country hath suffered loss, and become sterile, from the disunion of these two spouses, religion and liberty; and that the vigour of political and religious thoughts hath declined away. . . . But, by the spirits of our great fathers in Church and State! are we never again to see the re-union of religious and free-born men? Is there to be no city of refuge, no home, no fellowship of kindred, for one who dares to entertain within his breast these two noblest sentiments—freedom and religion? Is he aye to be thus an outcast from the pious, who neglect all political administrations, except when they touch sectarian pride, or invade churchmen's prerogative? . . . If England would make another step in advance, she must look to the strength in which she made her former steps; and if foreign nations would possess the blessings of England, they must look to that æra of her history, when her liberty struggled into light.' Happy—again I say—the age that had a voice to utter words like these! And happier we in whose age they are beginning to take effect.

Their divorce the cause of national decay.

A critical indictment.

Theological obscurity and unsoundness—groundless aspersion of his contemporaries—frequency of inconclusive reasoning—indulgence in coarse, and even irreverent, expressions—disjointed imagery—and a generally affected, or, as Johnson says of Milton's prose, 'Babylonish' diction—were faults alleged against Mr. Irving, even by his more lenient critics. This is so heavy a catalogue of offences, that only splendid parts and eminent services can secure him who is guilty of them from contempt and oblivion. That such were Mr. Irving's parts, and such his services, I firmly believe. I may therefore the more frankly confess my conviction, that none of these charges were altogether unfounded. From the first, in the order above stated, I am not even concerned to defend him: the obscure is frequently a convenient refuge, in theology, for independent thinkers, even from their own thoughts; and no man who ventured beyond the common-places of doctrinal exposition ever escaped the imputation of heterodoxy. Nor is the second a very grave impeachment: it is a common failing of great men to rate meaner souls even below their real worth, and of reformers and revivalists to unduly disparage their own generation by comparison with a partly imaginary past. When a writer stoops to describe others of his profession by such epithets as 'hireling' and 'reptile,'—ascribes their doings to no better motives than cupidity or malice, and barbs the arrows of literary warfare with the words of spiritual warning—I can offer, on his be-

half, no better apology than the example of some illustrious names:—

> 'I did but prompt the age to quit their clogs,
> By the known rules of ancient liberty,
> When straight a barbarous noise environs me,
> Of owls and cuckoos, asses, apes, and dogs:
> * * * * *
> But this is got by casting pearls to hogs.' *

When the 'uncovenanted mercy' of God is designated an Alsatia—a refuge from justice of those most obnoxious to it; when 'force of character' is ascribed to Him whose repose is as perfect as His power; or when, of the Incarnate One, it is said, that 'He stripped Himself' to the work of human redemption—I cannot forbear regret, though I have no right to blame. A writer who will, in one sentence, represent the same thing by half a dozen utterly incongruous images, without a single note of transition, cannot be declared a model of composition. And lastly, it is not to be denied, that an air of affectation, and wanton divergence from the established rules, pervades our author's style. But, on this point, both he and his biographer have something to say.

The author's defence on one count.

In the preface to the third edition of the 'Orations,' (two large impressions had sold off in four or five months) Mr. Irving replies, at considerable length, to the strictures of the periodical press upon his diction:—'For the taste and

* Milton's second sonnet 'On the Detraction which followed my writing certain Treatises.'

style of composition, I carry my appeal from the judgment of upstart, unknown pretenders, to the great fathers of English composition, who have been my companions, my models, first of thought, and next of the utterance of thought. In whom, and in the Holy Scriptures, I have found forms for expressing the deeper feelings of the heart, and the sublime aspirations of the soul, which I could not find in the writers of the later times, but which seem reviving again in one or two of our living authors, for the blessing of this ancient land. *Style is not the dress of thought, but the body of thought*, and is active and energetic according as the spirit that works beneath is active and energetic; and when monotony and dulness mark the style, and is commended by the critics of every age, it proves that the living spirit of thought is dull and disordered, and needeth to be roused from its lethargy. And the Lilliputian creatures who have caught it in its listless and sleepy mood, will strive to pinion it down, dreading the resurrection of its might. . . . I have been accused of affecting the antiquated manner of ages and times now forgotten. The writers of those times are too much forgotten, I lament; and their style of writing hath fallen much out of use; but the time is fast approaching when this stigma shall be wiped away from our prose, as it is fast departing from our poetry. I fear not to confess that Hooker, and Taylor, and Baxter, in theology; Bacon, and Newton, and Locke, in philosophy; have been my companions, as Shakspeare, and Spencer, and Milton, have been in poetry. I cannot learn to think as they have done,

which is the gift of God; but I can teach myself to think as disinterestedly, and to express as honestly what I think and feel; which I have, in the strength of God, endeavoured to do. They are my models of men—of Englishmen—of authors. My conscience could find none so worthy, and the world hath acknowledged none worthier. They were the fountains of my English idiom; they taught me forms for expressing my feelings; they showed me the construction of sentences, and the majestic flow of continuous discourse. I perceived a sweetness in every thought, and a harmony in joining thought to thought; and through the whole there ran a strain of melodious feeling, which ravished the soul as a vocal melody ravisheth the ear. Their books were to me like a concert of every sweet instrument of the soul, and heart, and strength, and mind. *They seemed to think, and feel, and imagine, and reason, all at once;* and the result is, to take the whole man captive in the chains of sweetest persuasion.

'They are not always in taste. But who is Taste, and where are his works, that we may try what right he hath to lift his voice against such gifted men? This Taste, which plays such a part in these times, is a bugbear, an ideal terror, whose domain is defended by newspaper scribblers, reviewers, pamphleteers, and every nameless creature. His troops are like King David's—'every one that is in distress, every one that is in debt, every one that is discontented.' And what are his manifestoes? Paragraphs in the daily papers, articles in magazines, and critiques in reviews. And how long do they last? A day, a week, a month, or

some fraction of a year—aye, and until the next words of the oracle are uttered. And what becometh of these oracles of the dreaded power? They die faster than they are born: they die, and no man regardeth them. Such are the staunch upholders of this empire of Taste, before which the spirit of authors croucheth; and such their title to set up their ephemeral doggrel against those lasting forms of speech which Bacon, and Hooker, and Milton, chose for the venerable covering of their everlasting thoughts. One half of the true coinage of the English tongue hath fallen into disuse in their most pitiful traffic of thought and feeling; idioms, illustrations, and figures, and every form in which it is natural for a strong and fervent mind to cast itself, they would cramp with their little power. . . .

'Taste, if it be anything, is that rule and restraint which great understandings have prescribed to themselves, and which the great understandings that have succeeded them have approved. The judges of good taste in any kind are the good performers in that kind, and the oracles by which they go in their judgments, are first, their own perceptions of fitness, and next the great performances which successive ages have approved. Now, where can we go for such judges, or such oracles, in this country, but to these very men, and these very works, I am convicted of imitating? Do I, in this, asperse the authors of the present day? By no means. They remain for the judgment of posterity, and are no criterion to go by while they live. But, as to the writers of the periodical press, who give out oracles of taste, they are one class of beings; the

writers for future ages are another class of beings, whose souls are under a different inspiration. The one inspired by gain, applause, and malignity; the other by truth, and the commonweal of men. And their style must be different; as the style of a charlatan, exhibiting his wonders on a stage, is different from the style of a philosopher searching, in his closet, into the deep relations of the universe.'

A short dissertation on 'Style.'

The italicised sentence of the first of the above paragraphs, seems to me to epitomise, but not exhaust, the controversy. Words are more than the clothing of ideas; they are, if not mechanically uttered, themselves ideas. We do not think but in speech, mental or vocal. That is only sensation, or emotion, not thought, which does not find its representatives in some vocabulary or other. Hence, no two words are precisely synonymous; and he who adds a word to a language adds to the thought-power of those who intelligently use that language. And the right arrangement of thoughts is inseparable from the right arrangement of words. To say that a writer's style is feeble, wearisome, unadorned, is, in truth, to say all that of his mind. Or to say that his style is diffuse, wordy, pompous, is to charge him with undisciplined, repetitive, inflated thinking. To complain that his style is eccentric and unusual, may, therefore, be only a complaint that he does not think as other men think. Nevertheless, expression is an art—is, as such, to be cultivated—has its rules, models, and standards. And he who deviates from the methods of

expression common to his time, runs just this risk—the detection of his thoughts; which is really, to some men, a serious risk. Had he been content with commonplace diction, the thoughts he utters might have passed for his own, and at current value. *Now*, they may be discovered to be some other men's; or, if genuine, of little worth. Thus, most of our great writers, and all our profound thinkers, made each one a style for himself. Bacon does not write like Chaucer; nor Locke like Bacon; nor Carlyle like either. Hume and Gibbon, Johnson and Burke, Macaulay and Alison, are just as unlike in their styles as in the character of their intellects. Why, then, was Irving condemned unheard, for not having stereotyped his discourses in the moulds used by contemporary sermon-writers? Why was he treated as, *prima facie*, guilty of literary misdemeanor, in that he employed an old terminology and construction? Because he thereby attacked the feeble uniformity of his profession—of writers, as well as of preachers. Religious literature had reached, in those days, the nadir of its long descent. Doddridge was the last and least of the race who made religion respected even by whom it was not beloved. Blair marked the setting in of a new period—that of frigid elegance and feeble artificiality. From that time to this of which we are writing—a space in the intellectual firmament illumined by many secular stars of first magnitude, Johnson, Goldsmith, Burke, Scott, Jeffrey, Gifford, Byron Coleridge, Southey, Dugald Stewart, Thomas Brown—only Chalmers, Hall, Gisborne, and Foster, produced

anything on behalf of religion which literature did not speedily disown: and one, at least, of these four was obnoxious to critical canons. The 'popular preachers' of that whole time were, with scarcely an exception, jokers of jokes, retailers of anecdotes, furious declaimers, or pretty twaddlers. If any man think this description harsh, let him mention a book of sermons not by one of the above named, and which is read for its thoughtfulness and beauty rather than for its doctrinal or devotional qualities. Or let him go through the first half dozen volumes of 'The Pulpit.' Grievously will his soul be afflicted in traversing that arid desert of dullness, swept by the monsoon of sulphureous declamation. And it should be remembered, that this was in an age when the minister of religion had become, almost for his office sake, one of the priesthood of letters—an age in which, as our author has said, a second Pentecost should give the gifts of writing rather than of speech. True, it was not the 'religious' reviewers alone, nor secular writers without repute, who censured Edward Irving's style: for instance, the article quoted from 'The Times' bears the impress of a hand that made journalism take rank with the highest of intellectual vocations. The fact may be in part accounted for by the forgetfulness of such writers, that to different classes of thought belong different methods of expression—as different strains of music to different motions of the feet; and that to the pulpit may belong

> The Dorian mood
> Of flutes and soft recorders; such as raised
> To highth of noblest temper heroes old.

Nor wanting power to mitigate and swage
With solemn touches, troubled thoughts, and chase
Anguish, and doubt, and fear, and sorrow, and pain.

For myself, though I would have the preacher walk among men as only a man, yet would I not see the gait of the market-place in the temple; and I do find in the pages of Edward Irving, with all their abundance of obsolete auxiliaries, their superfluity of conjunctions, their unfashionable wealth of imagery, and their boldness of epithet, the footprints of no mincing fop nor buskined dwarf, but of a natural giant, striding on to the goal of intellectual fame and spiritual kingship.

CHAPTER VI.

SEEDS AND SIGNS OF CHANGE.

THE event next in order, in Mr. Irving's public life, to that on which we have dwelt through two chapters, was the delivery and publication of a sermon on Missions. In 1824, he was requested by the directors of the London Missionary Society to take one of the services by which the custom is to celebrate its anniversaries. The day fixed was May the 14th—and the place, the Tottenham Court Chapel. The attractiveness of the preacher was signally displayed. So early was the immense edifice filled, while hundreds sought admission in vain, that it was deemed advisable to commence the reading of prayers an hour before the time advertised. This premature commencement proved wise on another account. Such was the length of the preacher's written discourse, that twice he paused, while the congregation sang portions of a hymn. Notwithstanding its prolixity, the oration rivetted attention to the end. But it did not afford unmixed satisfaction. It enunciated a view of

A Sermon for the London Missionary Society

the missionary enterprise, for which the conductors of that enterprise were quite unprepared, and from which the most admiring auditors could scarce withold the epithet "romantic." Taking for his text the gospel accounts of Jesus sending forth the Seventy, the preacher contended that the Lord's directions to them —to make no provision for their maintenance, but seek out the worthy, and accept only their hospitality—these instructions, Mr. Irving argued, were not designed exclusively for the Jewish Messiah's messengers to his own people, but were of perpetual obligation—'the missionary charta' for all ages, and the model for all Christian propaganda. And this representation he followed to its practical result; roundly asserting the imperfection of the institution for which he pleaded. His hearers doubtless set down all this to an excess of simple-mindedness, or of speculative eccentricity; but, with the facts of his early life before us, we know that this simplicity was allied with a high, adventurous spirit, and that the speculation had well-nigh embodied itself in heroic action.

When this extraordinary sermon appeared in print—which was not till nearly twelve months after its delivery; and then, only because the generous author wished to bestow upon the widow of the martyred missionary Smith the proceeds of its sale—it had been expanded to a hundred and sixty pages, and was entitled, 'For Missionaries after the Apostolic School, a Series of Orations, in Four Parts. Part I—The Doctrine.' Prefixed, was the following epistle dedicatory:—

Published as an 'Oration.'

'TO SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE, ESQ.

'My Dear and Honoured Friend: — Unknown as you are, in the true character, either of your mind or of your heart, to the greater part of your countrymen, and misrepresented as your works have been by those who have the ear of the vulgar, it will seem wonderful to many that I should make choice of you from the circle of my friends, to dedicate to you these beginnings of my thoughts upon the most important subject of these or any times. And when I state the reason to be, that you have been more profitable to my faith in orthodox doctrine, to my spiritual understanding of the word of God, and to my right conception of the Christian Church, than any or all the men with whom I have entertained friendship and conversation, it will, perhaps, still more astonish the mind, and stagger the belief, of those who have adopted, as once I did myself, the misrepresentations which are purchased for a hire and vended for a price, concerning your character and works. You have only to shut your ear to what they ignorantly say of you, and earnestly to meditate on the deep thoughts with which you are instinct, and give them a suitable body and form that they may live, then silently commit them to the good sense of ages yet to come, in order to be ranked among the most gifted sages and greatest benefactors of your country. Enjoy and occupy the quiet which, after many trials, the providence of God hath bestowed upon you, in the bosom of your friends; and may you be spared until you have made known the multitude of your thoughts unto those

Dedication to Coleridge.

who at present value, or shall hereafter arise to value, their worth.

'I have partaken so much high intellectual enjoyment from being admitted into the close and familiar intercourse with which you have honoured me, and your many conversations concerning the revelations of the Christian faith have been so profitable to me in every sense, as a student and preacher of the Gospel, as a spiritual man and a Christian pastor; and your high intelligence and great learning have at all times so kindly stooped to my ignorance and inexperience, that not merely with the affection of friend to friend, and the honour due from youth to experienced age, but with the gratitude of a disciple to a wise and generous teacher, of an anxious inquirer to the good man who hath helped him in the way of truth, I do now presume to offer you the first fruits of my mind, since it received a new impulse towards truth, and a new insight into its depths, from listening to your discourse. Accept them in good part, and be assured, that however insignificant in themselves, they are the offering of a heart which loves your heart, and of a mind which looks up with reverence to your mind.

'EDWARD IRVING.'

The preface states that when the engagement with the Missionary Society's directors was made, Mr. Irving had no foresight of the direction which his thoughts would take; that the controversy excited by his discourse compelled him to withold it from the press till he could re-write it; and that that labour, feeble health compelled him to defer till a few weeks of retirement

in the autumn gave him the necessary leisure. The spirit of the whole production is then revealed in a passage which the reader of the foregoing chapters will justify us in denominating characteristic:—'This is the age of expediency, both in the church and out of the church; and all institutions are modelled upon the principle of expediency, and carried into effect by the rules of prudence. I remember, in this great metropolis, to have heard it uttered with great applause in a public meeting, where the heads and leaders of the religious world were present, "If I were asked, What are the first qualifications for a missionary? I would say, Prudence. And what the second? Prudence. And what the third? Still I would answer, Prudence." I trembled while I heard, not with indignation, but with terror and apprehension, what the end would be of a spirit which I have since found to be the presiding genius of our activity, the ruler of the ascendant. . . . . This expediency hath banished the soul of patriotic energy from our senate; the spirit of high equity from our legislation; self-denying wisdom from our philosophy; and of our poetry, it hath clipped the angel wing, and forced it to creep along the earth. And if we look not to it, it will strangle faith, and make void the reality of the things which are not seen, which are the only things that are real, and cannot be moved. Money, money, money, is the universal cry. Mammon hath gotten the victory; and may say, triumphantly (nay, he may keep silence, and the servants of Christ will say it for him), "Without me ye can do nothing."'

The modern substitute for miracles—

Out

of this spirit—it is contended—has grown an exaggerated idea of the value of miracles to the first preachers of Christianity. Expediency must have a solution of every difficulty from the visible; and this—the physical power of the miracle—was the only point at which the Gospel came in contact with the visible. Hence, the corrupted mind of this age cries out, 'The Gospel owed its success in the first age wholly to this, or to this almost wholly; but for us, we must accommodate ourselves to the absence of these supernatural means, and go about the work in a reasonable prudent way, if we would succeed in it; calculate it as the merchant does an adventure; set it forth as the statesman doth a colony; raise the ways and means within the year, and expend them within the year; and so go on as long as we can get our accounts to balance.'

Into this 'exaggeration of miracles' the writer undertook to go thoroughly, in subsequent orations; and more — to controvert the notion consequent on this first diversion of Christian sympathies from the apostolic spirit—the notion, that 'certain offices have altogether ceased out of the church;' undertaking to assert and demonstrate that the fivefold ministry of 'apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers,' arise out of the everlasting necessities of the church.

and neglect of offices intended to be everlasting.

Amidst the storm of disapprobation which the style, temper, and doctrine of this oration excited, it was universally admitted that it contained many passages of 'singular energy and beauty.' My own impression is, that in

The Oration critically characterised.

this instance the orator rather overlays his natural eloquence by the arts of the rhetorician; dwelling on allusions which should have been dismissed as soon as introduced, if introduced at all; drawing out into frivolous detail similes which it would have been sufficient to have suggested; and altogether stooping too much to the vitiated taste of the usual attendants on religious celebrations. Nevertheless, it invites much more extensive quotation than can be afforded; and the following excerpts must be understood to exemplify rather the doctrine than the beauties of the volume.

Summary of the missionary estate.

'Thus went forth the first messengers of the kingdom, commissioned to the most pure, and benevolent, and worthy part of the people; and they approached them upon the side whereon a good man liketh best to be approached—of kindness and humanity: for it is more blessed to give than to receive. Yet, to keep their character clear from all associations of mendicity or meanness, there is no scrip, nor purse, nor obsequious demeanour, allowed them; nothing that might take from the heavenly condition of the men; no demand for food or raiment: what is set before them they partake of; and the spiritual knowledge and power which they possess they as freely give in return. If none is worthy, they pass on: if they are persecuted, they escape away; as it were, fishing the land, and taking in their spiritual net the worthiest and the best thereof; establishing the everlasting covenant between God and good men—between heaven and whatever is best upon the earth. They are kept in close dependance upon God's

assistance, and cannot move a step but in the strength of faith. They are delivered out of the conditions of policy, out of the conditions of force, out of the conditions of gain, out of the conditions of selfishness and of ambition; for I defy any one maxim which appertaineth to these four spheres of human activity, to help them one jot in fulfilling their instructions: and they are delivered into the spiritual conditions of the spiritual kingdom which they went about to propagate. In prayer and communion with the Spirit of God, they sail along upon an unseen and unpiloted course. They are living models of what they teach; moving epistles of the Spirit of God; incarnations, each one in his measure, of the Divine nature; instead of the Scriptures to those who have them not, and commendations of the Scriptures to those who have them. And if, as hath been said, the Bible is its own witness, these men, who personified all its truth that can be personified, and with their lips spoke the rest, must be their own witnesses. And by being hindered from worldly interests and worldly attachments, they are hindered from worldly discourse. They address only the immortal part of the people; they confer upon no news but the good news of the kingdom; they touch no interests but the interests of eternity; speak of no country but heaven, in no authority but the name of God. Which four things—wisdom to address the worthiest people, entire dependance upon God, exemplification of the doctrine, and constant debate with the spirits of men—are surely four of the great principles in the propagation of the Gospel. And it is

incredible, from how many altercations, from how many aberrations of purpose, and strivings of passion, and oppositions of interest, they are cut off. For if they are brought into debate, it must be for some spiritual sake, and spiritual truth must be elicited. If they are mistreated, it must be in the face of justice and innocency, which makes friends to the injured; and, doubtless, whatever happeneth good or ill to them, good must come out of it to a cause thus implicated with no earthly interests, and devoted wholly to spiritual ends.

The exclusive spirituality of their enterprise.

'They who go forth to extend temporal power, and lay the foundations of earthly dominion, may and must go in the strength of chariots, and horsemen, and munitions of war; they who go forth to establish an influence and empire over royal courts, may go in the strength of all-subduing wealth, and diplomatic cunning; and they who go forth to discover the unknown regions and limits of the terraqueous globe, must go with the state of science, and in the strength of bold adventure. But they who went forth to bring all earthly powers under the Prince of Peace, and to subdue all arts and policies of man to the child-like simplicity of the wisdom which cometh from above, and to spread the spiritual kingdom of Christ over the bounds of the terraqueous globe, must divest themselves of those helps and instruments, whereby the others prosper. They must not cast out Beelzebub by Beelzebub. They must not conquer a peace with arms in their hands, which, though a good enough combination of words for the earth, is a solecism in the speech of heaven. By being under Mammon, they

will never come to be under God: by conferring with Belial, they will never hold communion with Christ. Each kind hath its appropriate equipment; that which is appropriate to the powerful is power, to the politic is policy, to the scientific is science, to the spiritual is the Holy Spirit. The weapons of their warfare are not carnal, but spiritual; yet powerful to the pulling down of strong holds. The stone that Daniel saw cut out without hands must swell without the help of human hands and fill the earth. The kingdom which is to cast down every other kingdom must be independent of those kingdoms which it casteth down; must establish itself in its own proper strength; and living in this heaven-derived strength, must live for ever.'

'Bad as the world is, wild as is its ambition, heartless as is its vanity, proud as its riches are, and mad as they are all—ambition, vanity, and riches—I cannot but please myself with the imagination that there is no clime so barbarous, or (which I believe is the more dangerous extreme) there is no region so polished, as not to possess a gleaning of worthy spirits to welcome these travellers between heaven and earth. . . . The ambitious, I see, would spurn them, and they would be content to be spurned; the cruel, I see, would maltreat them, and they would be content to be maltreated; the hollow-hearted wits and satirists, too, would make merry with them, and they would be content to be made merry withal; and the busy bustling crowd would pass them unheeded, and they would be content all unheeded to be passed. "What do these babblers say?" "They

To whom they are sent —the 'worthy.

seem to be setters forth of strange gods." "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." "They set up another king, one Jesus." "Away with them! they are not worthy to live." I hear these sentences echoing round their path; and I see them following it fearlessly onward to the death. But do I not see a Felix trembling, and a royal Agrippa knitting his half-convinced brows, and a judge of Areopagus blessing the heavenly tidings, and a Jason giving pledges for them, and a Gamaliel speaking before senates in their behalf; a Dorcas, a Lydia, and honourable women not a few, waiting upon the wants of the all-enduring men? And the thoughtful of the people are pondering the words which they speak, and the serious-minded are applying their hearts to the doctrine, and charity is leading them by the hand, and brotherly humanity is opening to them the gate, and affliction, comforted by their presence, is anointing them with tears of joy; and the genius of every high and heavenly faculty of the soul is sitting at their feet, well pleased to be schooled and taught by the messengers of heaven. I see they are but searching the land for the good, the noble, and the true; leaving the wretched, which love the earthly garbage, to wallow in their sensualities. They are gathering ac sweet and savoury plant, leaving the weeds standing for a devouring conflagration which is to come. The fire of heaven hath come down unto the earth (for these twelve were baptized with fire); but it loved not the earthly elements, and ran along seeking materials which had some savour of the worthy regions from whence it came; which, having found, it took and

enkindled, and left in a heavenly blaze, each one in his place, to purify, enlighten, and kindle the region round about.'

'What are missionaries but the prophet's order enlarged from the confines of the land of Israel, to roam at large over the world? God's messengers to the nations, telling them their several burdens if they repent not, and showing them salvation if they repent? each a Jonah to the several quarters of the heathen world: not servants of this or that association of men; but heralds of Heaven, who dare not be under other orders than the orders of Christ? It is a presumption hardly short of papal, to command them. They are not missionaries when they are commanded. They are creatures of the power that commandeth them. Up, up, with the stature of this character: it is high as heaven: its head is above the clouds which hide the face of heaven from earth-born men: its ear heareth the word of God continually, and continually re-echoeth what it heareth to the nations. The missionary is the hollow of that trump which resoundeth the voice of God. Let us reverence him—he is above the world, he is an ethereal being, and careth not for the concerns of time. I wonder how any one can be so impious towards God, so cruel towards men, as to wish to obliterate one feature of his celestial character. Though none of those who at present respectably bear the honours of the name come near to it, still let it stand, that being ever in their eye they may approach it more and more near. Though none of this generation

The Missionary a distinct form of manhood.

can bear the palm of it away, some of our children may. And though none of our children should reach it nearer than their fathers, some of our children's children may. Some favoured one may be raised up of God, who, like another Paul, may give it full and complete vitality. And when he shall arrive, rest assured, that like another Paul, he will convert half the nations. For well am I convinced, that the Gospel waiteth only for such spiritual men in order to burst its present narrow bounds; and the Spirit waiteth only for these necessary conditions to fill the inward soul of any man, and make him a chosen vessel,—a royal stately ship, to sail in all seas, and bear the treasure into all lands. I feel, that in pleading for the perpetuity of the missionary form of manhood, I am pleading the cause not only of the unconverted nations, but the cause of Divine power and truth, which is hindered from descending to tabernacle with mortals only by our low-thoughted cares and worldly occupations. Martha, who was burdened with many things, is the genius of the human race; Mary, who had chosen the one thing needful, is the genius of the missionary band, who, not out of the greatness of their grief, but the greatness of their love, have become careless of all those things, save that good part which shall not be taken from them.'

Review of the Oration in the Evangelical Magazine.

'The most reprehensible feature in these Orations'—complains the Evangelical Magazine, of June, 1824—'is, the incorrect and even calumniating manner in which they represent the existing scale of provision for the missionary's

support in heathen countries. It is all very well for Mr. Irving to maintain, that missionaries, when they land upon foreign shores, and among savage tribes, are to be left to shift for themselves. There is little risk in this doctrine, save to the good sense [to the reputation for good sense?] of the writer. But when he would speak of missionaries in general as men of sordid purpose, upon whom are conferred the luxuries of an easy and recreative existence, he is chargeable with an attempt to lower the credit of missionary undertakings in general; and unwittingly gives the sanction of his popular name to all the covetous reserves of the human heart.' This stricture seems to me as unprovoked as it is ill-expressed. I have met with nothing in the volume under review to justify it. Mr. Irving nowhere recommends that missionaries be set ashore hungry and naked, in a bleak clime, and among fierce people—though, if he had done so, he might also have asked, How else but in 'the irresistible might of weakness' was heathendom first penetrated? Nor does he, that I can discover, impute sordid motives and luxurious lives to modern missionaries. He is careful to explain, that it is the ideal of the missionary character which he is uplifting; and that to that ideal he would gradually elevate his brethren who preach Christ in foreign parts. He censures none—he insinuates nothing—but only points out what he deems a defect, and a source of feebleness. The practical result of his doctrine would obviously be, to make the missionary an apostle of Christ, not the agent of a society; a change which, if I much mistake not, every year's experience

of missionary societies—their schisms, suspicious, and and infinitesimal successes—tends further to commend to the imagination of the Christian commonalty.

An Expostulatory Letter by the Rev. W. Orme.

It was not left to the reviewers to counteract the supposed influence of Mr. Irving's Oration. The Rev. W. Orme, Secretary to the London Missionary Society, addressed to him an 'Expostulatory Letter,' which the religious criticism of that day endorsed as a 'masterly piece of Scriptural argumentation'—but of which the reader of these pages will probably be content to judge from a single specimen of the writer's dogmatic, declamatory manner:—'Your interpretation of the characters referred to as *worthy*, and especially of the 'Son of Peace,' whom you make to be Christ, is so unscriptural, and opposite to all the canons of biblical interpretation, that I know not which most to admire—your hardihood in making the assertion, or your simplicity in expecting that your readers will receive it. Alas! sir, if God has established "an everlasting connexion between *natural worth* and dispensations of grace, by bestowing his blessings on the most deserving," I, at least, could entertain no hope towards him; and if the Gospel must be first preached to such, it must be different, indeed, from what I ever understood it to be. The language of our Lord respecting the persons to whom his servants were first to announce his coming to visit them, showed, as plainly as possible, that the whole of this part of the commission had a peculiar reference to the people of Judea.' Mr. Orme must have forgotten that the first Gentile convert was selected for that

honour on account of his moral worthiness: 'Cornelius, thy prayer and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.'

This first Oration, 'For Missionaries after the Apostolical School,' was the last. Notwithstanding his profession of a firm resolve to prosecute to an issue the 'six counts' of difference with the churches which he concludes by setting forth—and notwithstanding his formal announcement of several consecutive discourses—there appeared nothing further upon the subject from Mr. Irving's pen. Probably, neither for his reputation, nor for the interests of religion, was this to be regretted. Renown quickly degenerates into notoriety, when the object of it takes his stand far above the level of his age, however occasional flights may be applauded; and to persist in proclamations that evoke no response, is but bad service to the truth thus prematurely heralded. To my mind, the value of the fragmentary performance we have been reviewing is almost confined to its significance—its indication of a mind deepening in discontent with surrounding conditions; thirsting to bring its contemporaries to a 'height of noblest temper' by itself not fully attained; out of joint with the mechanism, and even the doctrine, as well as the spirit, of all existing communities; its further indication that the nurse of these wayward humours was none other than England's poet-sage, the most imaginative and accomplished philosopher that had yet appeared. In other words, I am pleased to learn from this Oration these three facts—that the most doughty champion of Evangelicism, which concludes

Irving and Coleridge.

all men under indiscriminate condemnation, had come to perceive a special relation of God to the worthy; that one of the two most conspicuous ministers of an antiprelatic church, desired the restoration of a hierarchy; and that a great luminary of the religious world had come into ominous conjunction with a philosopher. This last fact is full of interest. The dedicatory letter to Coleridge introduces us to that 'old man eloquent,' who now sat on Highgate-hill, in the asylum of reverent friendship, discoursing of all highest themes with garrulous copiousness, but amazing brilliancy and profundity—and to that group of listening disciples, which comprised, with Irving, John Stirling, and his two biographers, Hare and Carlyle; Maurice and Trench, Mill and Buller—all future rulers in the spirit world. One does not readily recollect, from Coleridge's 'Remains,' or the records of his talk, words that would have prompted the Oration for Missionaries. But one does recognise, in a moment, the natural influence of the sage on the young preacher. 'The constant gist of his discourse,' says Carlyle of Coleridge, 'was lamentation over the sunk condition of the world; which he recognised to be given up to atheism and materialism, full of mere sordid disbeliefs, mispursuits, and misresults. All science had become mechanical; the science not of men, but of a kind of human beavers. Churches themselves had died away into a godless mechanical condition, and stood there as mere Cases of Articles, mere forms of churches; like the dried carcasses of once swift camels, which you find left withering in the thirst of the universal desert—ghastly portents for the present,

beneficent ships of the desert no more.' If the Glasgow Farewell Discourse, and the Orations on the 'Oracles of God and Judgment to Come,' had not preceded Irving's intimacy with Coleridge, we should have confounded cause and effect. As it is, we can readily imagine the stalwart figure of the handsome Caledonian loitering beside the shrunken, crooked form, that shuffles from side to side of Mr. Gilman's* garden walks, talking for two hours and three quarters at a time, in nasal dialect, of diseased humanity, dead churches, the all-expressive Logos, 'om-ject' and 'sum-ject,' vernunft and verstand. Coleridge's laments over a Christless Church and a Godless world, would deepen Irving's native disdain of contemporary conditions. Coleridge's transcendental methods of restoring the Divine life to human forms, would quicken Irving's inextinguishable hopefulness and love. We catch, in his earlier writings, glimpses of the doctrine which traces error to the intellect, and finds truth ever in the heart. It is to the *consciousness* of man—as we have repeatedly observed—that Irving makes incessant appeals. Coleridge would systematise this. He would explain to the disciple, in whom he fancied a likeness to Paul and Luther (as I have somewhere read), that doctrine of the understanding and the reason, which is slowly antidoting the poison of materialistic philosophy and Protestant excess. He would deliver the strong and throbbing mind that looked up to his, from the half-broken chains of a literal and logical religion. He would preach the gospel of

* We learn from the Dedication of Vol. ii. of Lectures and Occasional Discourses, that Mr. Irving was indebted to Mr. Basil Montague for his introduction to Coleridge and his host, the Gilmans.

universal reconciliation, and paint the millennium not of a sect but of the world. Irving would go away feeling 'a new impulse towards truth, a new insight into its depths.' But reverend brethren, and their preacher-ridden flocks—knowing Coleridge only as an importer of German heresies—would lift up hands and eyes in warning censure. The reader, whether or not sympathising with their apprehensions of contagion, will admire, as few of Irving's contemporaries did, the ingenuous humility of this noble-minded, child-hearted man.

CHAPTER VI.

IN LABOURS ABUNDANT.

We have heard our author-preacher bewail those necessities of his lot and office which forbade him leisure for philosophic or pious meditation. Some of my readers may have noted, too, that he somewhere drops the phrase 'blessed labour.' It would seem that this phrase expressed more truly than that lament, his habitual feeling. Certainly, he added to the toils of pastorship others which only a moral or intellectual necessity exacted. Ere he had been in London twelve months, he was hard wrought as any popular preacher. In the spring of 1824, he preached, as we have seen, a sermon which he used his autumn holiday to expand into a book. In the course of the same year, he went to Birmingham to open a Scottish church; and his discourse ('The Curse as to Bodily Labour') occupies seventy pages of a large-leaved, solid volume. In the spring of 1825, he preached for the Continental Evangelization Society; and his discourse on that occasion—so little to the taste

Miscellaneous labours of 1824-25.

of some of his hearers, that they had not the decorum to hear him out—appeared, within twelve months, as a treatise of 588 pages octavo, entitled 'Babylon and Infidelity Foredoomed.' In the same year, 1825, a Scottish and a Hibernian educational societies enjoyed his advocacy; and each of the sermons written on their behalf is of the size of half-a-dozen ordinary discourses. Lastly, in the course of this same prolific year, he undertakes and completes, for a Glasgow publisher, an Introduction to Horne's Commentary on the Psalms.

The chief merit of all these performances—excepting the last-mentioned—is the extraordinary industry and fertility of mind which they display. The treatise on Pro-

These productions characterized—

phetical Interpretation, I deem—perhaps very wrongly, but not arrogantly—labour grievously misapplied. From the doctrine of the sermons on education—namely, the inseparableness of religious and secular instruction—I strongly dissent; and fear their influence was more for evil than for good. But in all I discover and rejoice over the traces of a strong and brilliant intellect—a devout and patriotic heart—a spirit that delighted in disinterested labour, and compelled the feebler body to service, itself incapable of rest. There is nothing perfunctory, hasty, or meagre, in any of these productions. They seem all to have been written with a pen that never halted but to take ink, yet never fell into a slipshod style. At his desk, as in the pulpit, Irving seems, like Barrow, never to have wanted thoughts, while limbs and lungs held out. "Are you not exhausted?" asked some one of the Puritan divine who had twice turned the hour-glass:

'Yes, with standing so long,' was the unaffected answer. And Irving never draws to a conclusion, in the third hour, without reserving topics started by the way for some future occasion.

To the treatise on Prophetical Interpretation, as the first of a large family, we must give some attention in a future chapter. The Introduction to the Psalms must be especially characterized as a very beautiful and pious composition. But our illustrations of these and other productions above-named, must be confined to a single paragraph of each. and illustrated.

'Oh, who, that hath an eye to behold the signs and causes of events, can fail to observe what a storm is brewing in the heavens, and is ready to burst over all the earth! And the calm that even now reigns is the surest prelude of the deluge which is about to be poured out, and the exactest fulfilment of the prophecy, which saith, that men with one consent, shall be saying, Peace, Peace! when it shall come bursting upon them in fury; they shall be marrying and giving in marriage, as in Noah's time, when the windows of heaven were opened. The wars and the rumours of wars, which were to arise before the end, have come, and lo! they are past; and all Europe is pleasing itself with the imagination of peace. But let every traveller who hath looked into the veins and arteries of the constitution of every kingdom thereof, say, whether they are not throbbing with the fever of passion, and every nerve vibrating convulsively under the weight which is oppressing it. Hear the exiles, who have fled from the face of the tyrannies to the State of Europe, in 1826.

arms of our sheltering capital, tell of the ferment which is stifled in the bosom of their several nations; and if ye would know how ungodly and unchristian a ferment it is, take those exiles, as an example, who have ruled the short ascendant of popular feeling in their several lands; and amidst all their zeal for liberty, and hatred of tyranny, hear how ignorant they are of all principles of religion and sound statesmanship—how full their breasts are of the boiling lava of hatred and revenge, against the authors of their wrongs.'

A day with the sons of labour.

'If you are up by times, you will hear, in the grey of the morning, the footsteps of the labourer, beneath your casement, pacing heavily on to the scene of his daily labour: as the dawn makes progress upon the rear of night, the din slowly increases and ascends until the first watch of the day. One constant volume of sound inspires the city like the noise of the neighbouring ocean, through which the rattling sound of chariot wheels, and the rolling din of heavy vans, and the shrill discord of oaths and angry men, break incessantly like the waves which dash the shore. It ceaseth not the live-long day; it ascendeth into your ear a ceaseless tide of sound, in which no instant of silence is to be discerned. A noise of men and of cattle, and of the instruments of their toil, which are all day long employed in bearing burdens from place to place, and in returning to bear more, until the shades of evening come to loose them from their harness, and allow them to rest their weary limbs. And these burdens which they bear are not the enjoyments of men, but the subject-matter of their toil; as

ye will discover, if ye follow them to their landing places. There, other laborious hands serveth them and disposeth them in their various places. And they are taken in laborious shops, and worked in laborious looms, where, as before, discordant and confused noises assail you on every side. And here, from earliest morn 'till latest evening, and often all night long, they ply their labours, submitting the raw materials of nature to a thousand operations over which it is the part of an immortal being to employ the power of his body, and the faculties of his mind. They labour in the midst of noise and bustle, from earliest morn till latest evening: and how are their minds employed in the midst of their labour? Let us wait to hear them open their minds with words. Do they speak to their animals—it is with an oath. Do they speak to each other—it is with an oath. Do they encounter an obstacle which provokes them to speak—it is with an execration. Do they express their hilarity—it is with rudeness, and oft with indecency. Let us follow them into their places of rendezvous over cups and potations, and hear their discourse. Is there any sign of an active intellect, or an active spirit, in this active and belaboured body? There is an active spirit to quarrel, and to bring their quarrels to the decision of blows; and there is an active intellect to invent names of opprobium, or words of ruder raillery, or of intemperate rage. Follow them to their families. Do you find any recreation of affection, any refreshment of home's happy scenes, any instruction of the children, or happy relaxation in the bosom of peace? Ah! how seldom do you find any enjoyment but eating, and

drinking, and sleeping; any intercourse but disaffection and quarrel. How seldom any communion with God, any fellowship of the spirit, any bowels of tenderness and compassion, any tenderness of conscience, any desire after immortality, any aspirations after celestial honour and blessedness!'

'Our notion of human nature, as explained above, is, that it is fashioned and furnished for more excellent purposes than to turn the clod, or handle machines; to transport the produce of the earth from place to place, or work in mines of gold and silver; or to eat, drink, and make merry, over the indulgences which are by those means procured. And, therefore, those systems of education whose chief aim it is to teach the nature of the physical productions of the earth, and the mechanical arts by which they are to be transported from place to place, and the chemical arts by which their forms and properties are changed, and the science of economy, or of turning our handiwork to the best account, are to me no systems of education whatever, unless I could persuade myself that man was merely king of the animals, head-labourer and master-workman of the earth. I can see a great use and value in these physical sciences, to enable a man to maintain himself with less brutal labour, to the end he may have more leisure upon his hands for higher and nobler occupations; and, in this respect, I greatly admire them, as having bowed the stubborn neck of the elements to the spirit of man, and restored him that power over the creation with which he was endowed at first. But, if

Imperfection of physical knowledge.

he is to be taught in his youth no higher occupation than this, no godlike recreation of his soul, no spiritual sciences—and if what he is taught of intellect be thus bound down, like Prometheus, to the barren earth—then have we an education, which, however splendid in its apparatus, however imposing in its experiments, however fruitful in riches, and all which riches can command, is poor and meagre, low, mean, and earthly, and altogether insufficient to satisfy man's estate; which doth but harness him for his work, which doth but enslave and enserf him to the soil, but giveth to him no tokens, no hint, nor intimation, of his reasonable being;—for I call not that reason which labours in the clay; it is but the instinct of the noble animal, and not the reason of the spiritual being. Such education will depress a people out of manliness, out of liberty, out of poetry and religion, and whatever else hath been the crown of glory around the brows of mankind.'

Respective errors of the respective Churches.

'I do wish in my heart, that the Roman Catholic Church would send forth some very spiritual men, who might retaliate upon us those acts of love which our very active, but not very spiritual, men are inflicting upon them—for I believe, before God, and in his protection I dare to utter it, that my own Church is translating spiritual truths into intellectual forms, as zealously as ever the Papists did translate them into sensual forms; and that the "dry rot of infidelity" is working as hastily her destruction, as the fermentation of sensual lust is working the downfall of the Papacy. And I believe, moreover, that in the ruling party of

the Church of England, there is as much of formality and Pharisaism, and as much hatred of spiritual truth, as in the Papacy, which hath retreats where piety pours itself out unseen. And that, take it for all in all, the church of England, though pure in doctrine, and devout in prayer, hath, from total want of discipline, no right to be considered as a Church at all, but as a mere national institution, where Christian doctrine is preached. And I believe, moreover, that the Dissenting bodies are becoming generally as political and sectarian, not to say radical, in their spirit, and so invaded with popular feeling, so commanded and overawed by it, that the Spirit of God is very closely confined, and sorely grieved, and much quenched amongst them. And to the Evangelical body of the Church of England, which I did once look upon as a star in the gloom, and to the spiritual of all churches and sects (for it is the work of the Spirit blowing where He listeth), I have this to say, that if they will preach less a dogmatical, and more a personal Gospel—that is, present the persons of the Godhead, thus purposing, thus speaking, and thus acting, for men, rather than the abstract purpose, word, and action—if they will go about to separate a church from the worldly mass by preserving the sacraments, those bulwarks of the visible church, full of meaning, and pure in application, as far as man can preserve them—the Lord may be pleased to make them the bearers of his standard; but if not (and faint, faint are my hopes)—if they go about to court the favour of princes and prelates, and put their trust in their growing numbers, or in their Shibboleths of shallowest

doctrine, or in their favourite preachers and approved books; then let them mark, that it was spoken and said unto them by one that loves them much, though Him they have little loved, that they also shall die away like an untimely birth, and bring forth no fruit of reformatino unto the land.'

'If now we turn ourselves to consider the manner or style of the book, and draw it into comparison with the lyrical productions of cultivated and classical nations, it may well be said, that as the heavens are high above the earth, so are the songs of Zion high above the noblest strains which have been sung in any land. For take out of the lyrical poetry of Greece and Rome the praises of women and of wine, the flatteries of men, and idle invocations of the muse and lyre, and what have we left? What dedication of song and music is there to the noble and exalted powers of the human spirit? What to the chaste and honourable relations of human society? What to the excitement of tender emotions towards the widow and the fatherless, the stranger and the oppressed? What to the awful sanctity of law and government, and the practical forms of justice and equity? We know, that in the more ancient time when men dwelt nearer to God, the lyre of Orpheus was employed to exalt and pacify the soul; that the Pythagorean verses contain the intimations of a deep theology, a divine philosophy, and a virtuous life; that the lyre of Tyrtæus was used by the wisdom of Lycurgus for accomplishing his great work of forming a peculiar people, a nation of brave and virtuous men; but in the

Lyrical Perfection of the Psalms.

times which we call classical, and with the compositions of which we imbue our youth, we find little purity of sentiment, little elevation of soul; no spiritual representations of God; nothing pertaining to heavenly knowledge or holy feeling; but, on the other hand, impurity of life—low, sensual ideas of God—and the pollution of religion so often as they touch it. But the songs of Zion are comprehensive as the human soul, and varied as human life; where no possible state of natural feeling shall not find itself tenderly expressed, and divinely treated with appropriate remedies; where no condition of human life shall not find its rebuke or consolation—because they treat not life after the fashion of an age or a people, but life in its rudiments, the life of the soul, with the joys and sorrows to which it is amenable from concourse with the outward necessity of the fallen world. Which breadth of application they compass, not by the sacrifice of lyrical propriety, or poetical method: for if there be poems strictly lyrical—that is, whose spirit and sentiments move congenial to the movements of music, and which, by their very nature, require the accompaniment of music—these odes, of a people despised as illiterate, are such. For pure pathos and tenderness of heart, for sublime imaginations, for touching pictures of natural scenery, and genial sympathy with nature's various moods; for patriotism, whether in national weal or national woe; for beautiful imagery, whether derived from the relationships of human life or the forms of the created universe, and for the illustration, by their help, of spiritual conditions; moreover, for those rapid transitions in which the lyrical muse delighteth; her lightsome graces at one time, her

deep and full inspiration at another, her exuberance of joy, and her lowest falls of grief, and for every other form of the natural soul which is wont to be shadowed forth by this kind of composition—we challenge anything to be produced, from the literature of all ages and countries, worthy to be compared with what we find even in the English version of the Book of Psalms.'

Their comprehensive spirituality.

'The pious Arminian, who resteth content with the infant state of Christ, and seeth no more in the rich treasures of God's Word than a full gift to all men, shrinking back with a feeling of dismay from such parts of the sacred volume as favour a system of doctrine suited to the manly state of Christian life, can yet trust himself without dismay or doubt to give back, from his inmost spirit, the sentiments and thoughts which he finds embodied in the Book of Psalms, veiled with no obscurity of speech, and perplexed with no form of controversy. . . And the more enlightened and not less pious Calvinist, who is not content evermore to dwell in the outer court of the holy temple, but resolveth, for his soul's better peace and higher joy, to enter into the holy and most holy place, which is no longer veiled and forbidden, finds in this Book of Psalms a full declaration of the deepest secrets of his faith, expression for his inmost knowledge of the truth, and forms for his most profound feelings. . . And from whatever point between these two extremes of spiritual life (the former the infancy, the other the mature and prefect manhood) any church hath contemplated the scheme of its doctrine—by whatever name they have thought

good to designate themselves, and however bitterly opposed to one another in church government, observance of rites, or administration of sacraments—you will find them, with one voice, consenting to employ those inspired songs, as well fitted to express the emotions of their spirits when stirred up to devout and holy aspirations of prayer and praise.

'The reason why the Psalms have found such constant favour in the sight of the Christian Church, and come to constitute a chief portion of every missal and liturgy, and form of worship, public or private; while forms of doctrine and discourse have undergone such manifold changes, in order to represent the changing spirit of the age and the diverse conditions of the human mind, is to be found in this—that they address themselves to the simple instinctive feelings of the renewed soul, which are its most constant and permanent part; whereas, the forms of doctrine and discourse address themselves to the spiritual understanding, which differs in ages and countries, according to the degree of spiritual illumination and the energy of spiritual life. For as those instincts of our nature which put themselves forth in infancy and early life towards our parents, and our kindred, and our friends, and derive thence the nourishment upon which they live, are far more constant than those opinions which we afterwards form concerning society, civil polity, and the world in general; and as those impressions of place, and scene, and incident, which come in upon us in our early years, are not only more constant in their endurance, but more uniform in

Why they are in constant favour.

their effect upon the various minds which are submitted to them, than any which are afterwards made by objects better fitted to affect us both permanently and powerfully—so we reckon that there is an infancy of the spiritual man, which, with all its instincts, wanders abroad over the Word of God, to receive the impressions thereof, and grow upon their wholesome variety into a maturity of spiritual reason, when it becomes desirous to combine and arrange into conceptions, and systems of conceptions, the manifoldness and variety of those simple impressions which it hath obtained. During those days of its spiritual infancy, the soul rejoiceth as a little child at the breast of its mother; feeds upon the Word of God with a constant relish; delights in the views and prospects which open upon every side; glories in its heavenly birthright and royal kindred; and considereth with wonder the kingdom of which it is become a denizen, its origin, its miraculous progress, and everlasting glory;—and as the infant life opens itself to the Sun of righteousness, it delights in its activity, and exhales on all around the odour of its breathing joy. To this season of the spiritual mind, the Psalms come most opportunely as its natural food. We say not that they quicken the life, to which nothing is so appropriate as the words of our Lord recorded in the Gospels; but, being quickened, they nourish up the life to manhood; and, when its manly age is come, prepare it for the strong meat which is to be found in the writings of the prophets and the apostles. But ever afterwards, the souls of believers recur to these Psalms as the home of their childhood, where they

came to know the loving kindness of their Heavenly Father, the fatness of His house and the full river of His goodness, His pastoral carefulness, His sure defence, and His eye that slumbereth not nor sleepeth, with every other simple representation of Divine things to the simple affections of the renewed soul. Therefore are the Psalms to the Christian what the love of parents, and the sweet affections of home, and the clinging memory of infant scenes, and the generous love of country, are to men of every rank, and order, and employment; of every kindred, and tongue, and nation.'

CHAPTER VII.

GLIMPSES OF HOME.

THIS is not, as we have already said, a Personal, but only an Ecclesiastical Biography—the Memoir, not of a Private, but only of a Public Life. Nevertheless, we gladly incorporate with, to illustrate by, whatever is recorded by himself of Irving the Preacher, whatever has become public, or may without impropriety be disclosed, of Irving the Man. His youth—his studious, pious, and struggling youth—we have therefore traced with deep interest, by the light of such knowledge as we possessed. We noted, too, as a fact of great magnitude, though of such brief record, his entrance on the holy and dignified estate of matrimony. How gladly would we now mark his manner of daily life—how this man so famous, bore himself to great and small; how this man so laborious, studied and relaxed—how he divided time, and how kept ever burning the lamp that never paled; above all, how the man whose religion was so catholic, and whose sensibilities so profound, disported himself

Irving's private life unwritten.

in society, in the bosom of domestic love, in the vicissitudes of the heart, and in the inner circle of friendship. Unhappily, the enclosure that should be ever sacred is still secret—the only hands that have a right to raise the veil have not done so. We must be content with the Glimpses of Home that may be caught through two or three incidents; but they will be the more precious to the reader who has marked, with sympathetic concern, that around that Home are moaning the angry winds of suspicion, presently to swell into a tempest of hostile opinion and religious intolerance.

The opening of his new chapel.

For the contents of the next page or two, we are indebted to Dr. Chalmers. The great divine came up to London in May, 1827, chiefly for the purpose of preaching at the opening of Mr. Irving's new church—a spacious and elegant building in Regent's Square, erected by the Cross Street congregation, at a cost of fifteen thousand pounds; the present minister of which is that amiable and pleasant writer, Dr. James Hamilton—the Washington Irving of religious literature. The only printed report of the doctor's discourse upon the occasion—so far as is known to the writer—is that contained in 'The Pulpit,' vol. viii; which is, unfortunately, only an abstract, given in the third person, and nearly omits what would be of most present interest—the preacher's concluding eulogy—'warm, eloquent, and fervent'—'on the talents, religious acquirements, and intrepid zeal of Mr. Irving.' It appears, however, from Hanna's Memoir of Chalmers that the Doctor wrote home, in diary fashion, the following:—

Extract from Dr. Chalmers' diary.

'*Monday, 7th May.*—After dinner, at Mr. Virtue's, Mr. Irving made his appearance, and took me to his house,* where I drank tea. Mr. Miller and Mr. Maclean, Scottish ministers of the London Presbytery, were there. Their talk is very much of meetings and speeches. Irving, though, is very impressive, and I do like the force and richness of his conversation.

'*Wednesday.*—Studied about two hours, and proceeded to take a walk with James. We had just gone out when we met Mr. Irving. He begged of James the privilege of two or three hours in his house to study a sermon. I was vastly tickled with this new instance of the inroads of Scotchmen. However, James could not help himself, and was obliged to consent. We were going back to a family dinner, and I could see the alarm that was felt at the return of the great Mr. Irving, who was very easily persuaded to join us at dinner, and the study was all put to flight. . . . Irving intermingled the serious and the gay, took a good and hearty repast, and charmed even James himself.

'*Thursday.*—Irving and I went to Bedford Square. Mr. and Mrs. Montague took us out in their carriage to Highgate, where we spent three hours with the great Coleridge. You know that Irving sits at his feet and drinks in every syllable that falls from him. There is a secret and, to me, unintelligible communion of spirit between them, on the ground of a certain German mysticism, and transcendental-like poetry, which I am not yet up to.

* Mr. Irving was living at this time, and up to the end of 1827, in Claremont Square, New Road.

'Returning from this interview,' Dr. Hanna informs us in a note, 'Dr. Chalmers remarked to Mr. Irving upon the obscurity of Mr. Coleridge's utterances, and said, 'That for his part, he liked to see all sides of an idea before taking up with it.' 'Ah!' said Mr. Irving, in reply, 'you Scotchmen would handle an idea as a butcher handles an ox. For my part, I love to see an idea looming through the mist.'

'*Friday*.—Mr. Irving conducted the preliminary service in the National Church. There was a prodigious want of taste in the length of his prayer—forty minutes—and, altogether, it was an hour and a half from the commencement of the service before I began . . . The dinner took place at five. Many speeches. Mr. Irving certainly errs in the outrunning of sympathy.'

A similar remark to this last is made by Thomas Carlyle, in his obituary notice of Irving:—'One may say it was his own nobleness that forwarded his ruin—the excess of his sociability and sympathy, of his value for the suffrages and sympathies of men.'

'*Saturday*, 19*th*.—Mr. Gordon informed me, that yesternight Mr. Irving preached on his prophecies, at Hackney Chapel, for two hours and a half, and, although very powerful, the people were dropping away, when he (Mr. Irving) addressed them on the subject of their leaving him. I really fear lest his prophecies, and the excessive length and weariness of his services, may unship him altogether; and I mean to write him seriously upon the subject.'

We are able to add but one other incident to these—and that is from another source, and of a saddening

nature. If aught of the pride of professional success elated the preacher's heart, as he stood up in the midst of his still crowded, if less fashionable, congregation, in the finest dissenting chapel in the metropolis, soon was the unhallowed intruder driven out by an emotion against which none of the passions of earth can strive. For, to a volume published in 1828, 'On Baptism,' is prefixed a dedication with this sorrowful superscription:—'To Isabella Irving, my Wife, *and the Mother of my two departed Children*.' 'I believe, in my heart,' he writes, 'that the doctrine of the holy sacraments which is contained in these two little volumes, was made known to my mind, first of all, for the purpose of preparing us for the loss of our eldest boy; because, on that very week you went with him to Scotland, whence he never returned, my mind was directed to meditate and print those discourses upon the standing of the baptized in the church, which form the sixth or seventh of the homilies on baptism: I believe it also, because, long before our little Edward was stricken by the hand of God, in Scotland, I was led to open these views to you in letters which, by God's grace, were made efficacious to convince your mind. I believe it, furthermore, because the thought contained in these two homilies, remained in my mind, like an unsprung seed, until it was watered by the common tears which we shed over our dying Mary. From that time forth, I felt that the truth concerning Baptism, which had been revealed for our special consolation, was not for that end to be retained; and therefore I resolved, at every risk, to open to all the fathers and mothers of the Christian Church

A public record of private sorrow.

the thoughts which had ministered to us so much consolation.'

We shall have to remark hereafter what was 'the thought' contained in these homilies, and what the apprehended risk of its publication. For the present, let us only note, with admiration, the pious attitude of mind which looks for a special revelation of spiritual truth in every afflicting visitation of Providence; and, glancing at our own little Edward or Mary, realize for a moment the pang of the parental hearts—hearts associated, it would seem, in loftiest communings, and therefore the more tender in their household sympathies.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONTROVERSIES.

If the writer had permitted his pen to follow the uncorrected impulse of his habitual sentiment, the heading of this chapter would have been, '*Unprofitable* Controversies.' With a settled conviction that the contests of intellect around objects of religious faith, have a much stronger tendency to excite passion than to promote truth, he looks with sorrowful compassion upon the large space which those contests occupy in the life he has undertaken to commemorate. Yet does he shrink from pronouncing barren that from which others profess to have drawn spiritual renovation, and to still draw strength, though to his own spirit it may be sterile as the rock and arid as the desert—from stigmatizing as ignoble desolations, spots by many regarded as the battle-grounds of lofty issues.

Thus, the first of the successive, and partly consentaneous, controversies, in which the latter half of Mr. Irving's public life was passed —the dispute touching the circulation of the Apocryphal books of Scripture by the Bible Society

The Bible Society and the Apocrypha.

—seems to his present biographer a sad waste of learning, industry, and feeling; a conflict in which the character of religious men suffered far more than religious principles could possibly gain. The argumentative side which Mr. Irving took, was that which appears to have erred in the ascription of religious importance to what was only a question of scholarly interest; but the practical question appears also to have become one of ingenuousness and good faith. The society's constitution contained no stipulation for the exclusion of the Apocrypha from the number of canonical books. The directors did not, therefore, omit the Apocrypha from copies of the Scriptures prepared for circulation in those parts of Christendom where its omission would only have provoked suspicion and dislike. It was in 1817 that the Edinburgh Auxiliary to the society had its attention drawn to this fact. The demand for explanation elicited the promise of expurgation in future editions. In 1822, it was discovered that the 'adulterated Word' was still dispensed from the society's depôt. The Edinburgh committee were supported in their reclamations by the assurance of a patriarch in the religious world (Dr. Waugh), that 'all Scotland would rise as one man against the Apocrypha.' After several years of paper warfare, the Edinburgh committee resolved to 'stop supplies'—to make no further remittances to the parent society till it had cleansed its bosom of the perilous stuff. Mr. Irving had sided with his countrymen in the quarrel, and had sustained their cause at the Board of Directors. It was, however, in the hope of preventing the threatened schism

that he took his way to the anniversary meeting of the society, held at the Freemasons' Tavern, on the 2nd of May, 1827. When he ascended the platform, his object was misapprehended—probably by both sections of the assembly—and his rising to speak excited one of those scenes which are of more frequent occurrence at meetings of professed Christians than of politicians, or any other class of persons. 'Mr. Irving rose, but, for some time, he could not be heard, in consequence of mingled hisses and applause, and cries of "Chair, chair, support the chair!" Mr. Irving (with great emphasis): "Do you know in what spirit I speak, that you thus dare to put me down? How is this, my lord?" Lord Teignmouth: "Perhaps it will be most regular that I should read the motion first?" The motion was read. Mr. Irving again rose. Cries of "Irving, Irving!" with hissing from the other side, impeded him for some time. At length he said, in a very loud voice—"My lord, I rise to support this motion, and not to oppose it, and to open that, if I can, which will tend to unite this society, and to heal its wounds. I left my sick bed in order to perform that duty to the Christian Church, and I will perform it, although for so doing I were to be hissed out of this assembly; aye, even if force were applied to thrust me out. (Cries of "No, no!") Your society has its arms on the two pillars of human superstition, and I believe that it will pull them down. But why should this mighty Samson commit a suicidal act, if by your wisdom and moderation you can attain the same end, and complete the same work?

Speech at Freemasons' Tavern.

I say not this to embroil the society in strife, nor to interrupt its course. I proposed it first in the committee; and not having been able to succeed there, I bring it before the society, that they may hear and judge of it, and do with it as it seemeth meet. When I first heard of the controversy, it gave me great pain; but when I heard the three resolutions read, which you, in your wisdom, agreed on, I said that Scotland had too much of principle, and too little of prejudice, not to be satisfied. Since that time, I have considered the subject more in detail, and learnt further particulars respecting it, and I have reason to find that the principle is much deeper in its root than I imagined, and that it will not, as I greatly fear, yield to the remedy proposed; but still it is, I think, in your power, without reflecting on the motives, or impugning the principles of the committee further than to say that they were in error, to heal these wounds, and reunite to your society that church which I am bound to reverence and to love."'

The report goes on to say that Mr. Irving proposed, first, that in addition to the resolutions already carried, the committee formally profess their regret for acts which they were known privately to regret; a proposition which was greeted with 'hisses and applause,' but which the speaker supported by sentences of manly and Christian persuasion. He suggested further, that at least a preference be given, in the distribution of the Scriptures, to agencies which would accept the canonical volume; and that vacancies in the committee should not be filled up by persons notoriously indisposed to execute the will of the society at large. Explaining,

in a few words, the special ardour of Scotland—where 'the Apocrypha is not at all known or recognised'—he thus concluded this effective specimen of extempore speech:—'"I have stood alone against my friends, and for a society of which I was chosen director in my seventeenth year;—but I remember that Paul stood alone at Antioch, in the midst of his friends; that he stood alone when Peter, and James, and Barnabas, were against him; and I tell you that if you will not hear him alone who, though not mild in manner, because earnest in spirit, is yet filled with affection for you and your society—if you will make no addition to that which has been done—if you will pour no oil into the wound which has been inflicted, it may prove to be incurable.'" Some cries of deprecation, but with great applause, followed. The resolution was carried, and Mr. Irving left the meeting as abruptly as he had entered it; feeling assured, probably, that his object was gained, though his specific counsel might not be adopted.

Prophetical controversy.

We have noted, among Mr. Irving's miscellaneous labours during the years 1825 and '26, the production of a volume on prophecy—an expansion of the discourse on the seventh of Daniel, preached at Hackney before the Continental Evangelization Society. If with this work had ended his essays at the interpretation of Scripture predictions, it might have been passed over with the single extract already given. It proved, however, the beginning of an enormous amount of preaching and writing on the subject—exposition soon becoming controversy. We

must, therefore, as briefly as is consistent with justice, describe the views which were the object of such voluminous advocacy. But first let us account for Mr. Irving's own possession of them; which, with his usual ingenuousness and noble-minded simplicity, he has enabled us to do. To the volume above-mentioned is prefixed an epistle dedicatory to Hatley Frere, Esq., who was known to his contemporaries as the brother of the British envoy at Madrid, and the author of a somewhat novel scheme of prophetical interpretation. To this gentleman, Mr. Irving writes:—

Mr. Hatley Frere's influence on Irving.

'When I first met you, worthy sir, in a company of friends, and—moved I know not by what—asked you to walk forth into the fields, that we might commune together, while the rest enjoyed their social converse, you seemed to me as one who dreamed, while you opened in my ear your views of the present times, as foretold in the Book of Daniel and the Apocalypse. But being ashamed of my own ignorance, and having been blessed, from my youth, with the desire of instruction, I dared not to scoff at what I heard, but resolved to consider the matter. More than a year passed before it pleased Providence to bring us together again at the house of the same dear friend and brother in the Lord; when you answered so sweetly and temperately the objections made to your views, that I was more and more struck with the outward token of a calm and sincere belief in truth. And I was again ashamed at my own ignorance, and again resolved to consider the matter. After which, I had no rest in my

spirit until I waited upon you, and offered myself as your pupil, to be instructed in prophecy according to your ideas thereof. And for the ready goodwill with which you undertook, and the patience with which you performed, this kind office, I am for ever beholden to you, most kind and worthy friend.'

He goes on to 'confess that at first my mind fell away from the system of interpretation which, with Mede, and More, and other exact interpreters, you have followed, and inclined to the simple idea that the Apocalypse is a narrative of events running on in historical order.' In this sentence, we have a key to the system of which Mr. Frere and Mr. Irving were the modern expositors. In the Discourse, we read, 'The name of Joseph Mede were never to be forgotten in theology, had he done no more than insist that the plan upon which the Book [of Revelations] was composed, should be studied from the book itself; altogether independently of its fulfilment. It is not a prophetic narrative in chronological order, which is to be forced to apply to the order of history, or history forced by arbitrary divisions to apply to it. Neither is it a series of disconnected visions, like the Book of Daniel. . . . It is not until the fourth chapter that we come to the distinct revelation of the things that are to be; those great future events, of prime importance to the church, which occupy the remainder of the book; in the giving of which, the following method can be distinctly traced:—a revelation under the name of SEVEN SEALS; another under the name of the SEVEN TRUMPETS; and a third under

Their theory of the Apocalypse.

the name of the LITTLE BOOK; which are not successive, but contemporaneous, or synchronical, like Daniel's, as may be seen from the diligent observation of the way in which they begin and terminate. The LITTLE BOOK hath to do with the temple of God only, or the church; the TRUMPETS have to do with the third part of the earth, or empire only (which gives us another clue to the period at which this prophecy opens, when Constantine had divided the empire into three parts); and as the fifth and sixth trumpets determine themselves to be the Saracen and Turkish woes, we thereby discover, also, that this head of the prophecy refers to the eastern part of the empire—and it remains, therefore, that the SEALS should refer to the empire in the west. . . . From the fifteenth chapter onwards to the end, there is no such diversity of application, but a series of events, whereof the succession can be easily followed by a careful student.'

To illustrate, or at least to embellish, this exposition, the expositor presently changes his analysis into analogy. 'If I were to select an emblem, by which to represent the method of this emblematical book, it would be that of a river which ariseth at three heads in one mountain, and flows, for a long space, in three great streams, through diverse countries of the earth; but afterwards reunites at the same place, and continues in one great channel to flow onward to the ocean. But if I were called to say what form of composition this book resembled the most, I would say the ancient drama, and that it was subdivided into four acts—the first, setting forth in several scenes the progress of one

subsiding action; the second, bringing forward the progress of a second action to the same point; the third, the progress of a third action to the same point; yet connected and linked one with another, but not appearing together upon the stage till the fourth act, which contains the triumph of the last of the three persons over the other two. And each of these acts has its prologue, descriptive of its contents and style of representation. And there are distinct notices of the changing of the acts; and, as in the ancient drama, there are choruses of saints and angels, to interpret and apply the matter, with angel voices, to make it still more clear. Which method is intricate (but its very intricacy becomes its evidence in the explication of it), only because of the great mass of matter to be briefly spoken. And yet I say not that it is a drama, but that it resembles those ancient dramas in which high poetry, divine morality, and mystical theology, were wont to be set forth in concert. For it is to be likened to other compositions only for the sake of more clear conception; being in itself singular and unrivalled, the sublimest and most comprehensive of God's revelations.'

In this theory there is nothing peculiar to Mr. Irving but the mode of its expression—nor in its application, up to the date of the French Revolution. Identifying the Antichrist, or Babylon the Great, of the apostolic writings, with the Papacy, and interpreting the period of its duration as one thousand two hundred and three score years—the years 533, when the imperial power was pledged to sustain the ecclesiastical supremacy of the Bishop of Rome; and 1793, when

the Revolution was at its height; correspond precisely with the beginning and end of that period of anti-christian or Babylonish power. Thus far, Protestant expositors are generally agreed. But Mr. Irving further ventured to trace a correspondence between the events symbolized by the SIX VIALS, and the events of the French Consulate and Empire—and even to find, in the circumstances of his own day, such as the alleged decadence of the Papacy and the Ottoman Empire, indications of the rapid approach of the final struggle symbolized by the 'battle of Armageddon,' to be immediately followed by the Second Advent of our Lord and inauguration of the millenial period. The passage in which he treats of Turkish decay, is too interesting, in the present crisis of European relations, to be passed over. It will be remarked that the period fixed upon as the culmination of Ottoman power, is just that in which we of to-day recognise the commencement of Turkish renovation:—

Ottoman decay.

'Our third civil sign is drawn from the condition of the Mahommedan, and more especially of the Turkish power, which, we have seen by the Apocalypse, is to wane and waste away, like the streams of a river in times of drought, before the great day of the coming of the Lord. We have shewn, from the exact study of prophecy, that within twenty years from this period, not only will that wave be rolled back from off the Holy Land, and the other parts of Christendom which it hath overspread, but also the Holy City of Jerusalem will be cleared, and the worship of Christ set up therein. Now, the Lord hath

given us, in these years of omen, such signs by which any one may see this power also drawing to its end. Observe the present condition of that power which heretofore shook Europe to its very centre, and against which the Cæsar could with difficulty maintain his capital—how it hath withered away in the anger of God, until, for the last five years, it has been struggling with all its might to put down the insurrection of one of its provinces, in size not the twentieth, if the hundredth, part of its dominions; which surely would, by this time, have prevailed against the oppressor but for foreign aid, which the Lord hath lent him until the time of his downfall shall be come. And all Christendom hath refrained from taking part with the Christian, to show her that the word of the prophet Daniel is already fulfilled, which said that it should be broken without hands. And not only amongst the Turks in Europe, but all over the East, the Mahomedan power is wasting away; and, like all doomed things, begins to be conscious of its approaching end; insomuch, that they say the Ottoman Porte is paralyzed with prophecies of its speedy end; a notion which one of my school companions, who travelled lately in Central Africa,* found to be spread abroad among the Mahometans there, though he was the first Christian that had conversed with them face to face. They continued to say:—"But our religion is to come to an end within thirty or forty years. Is it not so written in your book?" And, what is very

* Probably Major Clapperton. See note p. 4.

remarkable, another friend of mine, who stood upon the Himalaya mountains in India, by the most holy pool, where never Christian had dwelt before, found there also an expectation spread abroad of a religion from the West, which, in the same short space of thirty or forty years, was to possess the earth. Both of which reports they made to me with their own lips. Now, if the Turkish power be thus drying up, and manifestly near its end, it must be that the battle of Armageddon, and the coming of Christ, are also near at hand; for the former is the sixth vial, and the latter is the seventh vial, which immediately follows it.'

The rapid sale of two editions of this 'Discourse' was probably the result less of the writer's fame than of the general awakening of the religious mind of the country to the subject of prophetic interpretation. A remarkable proof of the extent of this interest is found in the conferences which were held, in 1827, at Albury Park, near Guildford, Surrey. In the memoir of the Brothers' Haldane, we read of the arrival at Geneva, some years before this event, of a gentleman whose 'pleasing manners and aristocratic bearing, finely chiselled features and intellectual forehead, bespoke his breeding and intelligence; whilst in his acute and penetrating glance, wit, sarcasm, and the love of drollery, seemed to contend with earnestness, benevolence, and an ever-restless Athenian craving after novelty.' The same figure—somewhat attenuated by years—may be seen nightly on a front bench of the House of Commons, beside but below the Ministry, whoever they may be; amidst all

Mr. Henry Drummond.

political vicissitudes, an independent supporter of the Queen's government. Never does that figure rise on the floor of the House, but the 'hush' of respectful and expectant attention is alone heard. For it is not only an English country gentleman, of great wealth and high character, an equal authority on the currency and on scientific agriculture, who is about to speak—but also, the accomplished scholar, the shrewd debater, the eccentric politician; a man of infinite humour and daring wit; 'no orator as Brutus is'—but what the House likes much better, a Cato whose censorship is without cant, whose varied knowledge is employed only to illustrate the subject in hand, whose satire is never malicious, and whose side-shaking sallies as little elate his vanity as they disturb his composure. When it is added, that his speeches on politico-religious questions are no less remarkable for their severity upon Papal pretensions than for their assertion of Catholic doctrine, no reader of the debates will fail to recognize Henry Drummond. A grandson of the first Lord Melville (Henry Dundas), and the son-in-law of Earl Kinnoul—a banker at Charing-cross, and a great landholder in Hampshire—young Mr. Drummond had the highest offices in the State open to his ambition, and the largest indulgences in pleasure at the command of his wealth. The patriotic cannot approve his indifference to the former—the frivolous will never comprehend his contempt of, or early satiety with, the latter. It was doubtless under the pressure of deep religious convictions, or at the impulse of fervent religious zeal, that he broke up his hunting establish-

ment at the Grange, afterwards sold the estate itself, and became the munificent, laborious propagandist of evangelical Christianity among the misbelieving Christians of the continent, and the unbelieving Jews of Europe and Asia. He appears to have formed a friendship with Mr. Irving shortly after the removal of the latter to London; and it is probable, from the similarity in dissimilarity of their minds, that they would exercise strong influence on each other. In dedicating to Mr. Drummond a volume of Occasional Discourses, Irving writes:—'To waive all considerations of personal friendship and esteem, no one, whom the religious stir and tumult of the last thirty years hath brought conspicuously before the Church, hath so strenuously served her best interests through good and through bad report, or doth so well deserve her thanks, as doth the man who brought forward, from their obscurity and persecutions, both Burckhardt and Wolff, and upheld their way against the sharp tongues of prudential and worldly-wise Christians; who laid the foundations of the Continental Society, and hath built it up in the frown and opposition of the "religious world;" who detected and dragged to light the false reports concerning the state of religion on the continent, with which the Bible Society, in its palmy times, had glozed the charitable ear of the church; who has stood forth as the friend and patron of every society which hath any shew of favour to the Jews; and, finally, who hath taken us poor despised interpreters of prophecy under your wing, and made the halls of your house like unto the ancient schools of the prophets.'

What passed at, or resulted from, these Albury Park Conferences, it would be foreign to our purpose to relate or inquire: the host was also the historian, and the curious may consult his three octavo volumes entitled 'Dialogues on Prophecy.' Suffice it to say, they were attended by about thirty clergymen, dissenting ministers, and distinguished laymen; and had a practical bearing, if in any direction, on the religious condition of the Jews. It is believed that substantial unanimity prevailed; but that this oneness of spirit did not altogether exclud the strife of tongues, would appear from an anecdote recorded of Mr. Irving—that, rising from his chair, and standing before the fire, he soliloquised aloud:—'It is a sore trouble to the flesh for a man to have more light than his brethren!' The story may be not true, but it deserves to be true. For, have not the spiritual vanguard of every age found themselves in cruel isolation? Irving, at least, was soon to prove his 'more light' a fire of living martyrdom!

The Albury School of Prophets.

The reader may remember Dr. Chalmers' expression of fear that Irving's prophetic fervour would unship him. From the period of these Albury conferences, the doctor's apprehensions seem to have proved not, alas! ungrounded. The seers of Chaldæa and Patmos, or rather his own interpretations of their visions, now became to Edward Irving a rule of life, instead of a guide to hope—a substitute for the proudly-cherished teachings of Bacon and Hooker—the termination of those new impulses of thought which the bard-philosopher had imparted. The fearless eulogist of Cameronian

martyrs and republican heroes became the revivalist of church-and-king doctrines, the fervid opponent of Catholic Emancipation, the fanatic-hater of the very word 'Liberal.' In the place of manly reasonings and conscience-touching appeals, he now offered to the people who continued to hang upon his lips, interminable expositions of the Apocalypse, with applications to every class of contemporary topics. In May, 1828, he went to Edinburgh, chiefly for the purpose of delivering a series of lectures on the Book of Revelation. 'He is drawing' writes Dr. Chalmers, 'prodigious crowds. We attempted this morning to force our way into St. Andrew's church, but it was all in vain. He changes to the West church for the accommodation of the public.' Again the doctor records:—'Monday, 26th. For the first time, heard Mr. Irving in the evening; I have no hesitation in saying that it is quite woeful. There is power and richness, and gleams of exquisite beauty, but withal a mysticism and extreme allegorization, which, I am sure, must be pernicious to the general cause. This is the impression of every clergyman I have met; and some think of making a friendly remonstrance with him upon the subject.' A week or two later, we read: 'He has given twelve lectures on prophecy to the people of Edinburgh; and certainly there must have been a marvellous power of attraction that could turn a whole population out of their beds so early as five in the morning. The largest church in our metropolis was each time over crowded.'

Irvings' lectures at Edinburgh.

During this visit, Mr. Irving attended the debates in the General Assembly, on the Test and Corporation Acts. On May the 24th, Dr. Chalmers writes:—'Mr. Irving is wild on the other side of me. He sat opposite to me when I was speaking, as if his eye and look—seen through the railing—were stationed there for disquietude. He, by the way, had a regular collision with Dr. H——, a violent sectarian, who denounced him as an enemy to the gospel of Jesus Christ. The colloquy that ensued was highly characteristic. Mr. Irving's part of it began with, "Who art thou, O man! that smitest me with thy tongue?"'

A scene in the General Assembly.

When the Assemby had closed its sittings, and Mr. Irving completed his lectures, he crossed the Forth to Kirkaldy, where it was announced that he would preach on the evening of Sunday, the 15th of June—a sacramental Sunday—in the church of his father-in-law, the Rev. Mr. Martin. His extraordinary popularity—intensified, perhaps, by local attachment—was, on this occasion, the cause of a terrible disaster. A few minutes before the time for his entering the pulpit, the joists which supported one of the side galleries gave way, and the gallery itself fell with a tremendous crash. Only two persons were killed by the actual fall, the descent not being instantaneous, and those below shrinking down into their pews. But in the crush which instantly set in from all parts of the church, twenty-six persons perished, and a hundred and fifty were more or less injured. From above and below, the people rushed

Calamitous accident at Kirkaldy.

terror-stricken to the door, and in the reckless selfishness of panic, the weaker were trampled upon, or pushed down stairs, by the stronger. Among the slain, were three daughters of one mother—a widow; 'who never again,' says the Annual Register, with unwonted pathos, 'raised her head, and within a few weeks was buried beside them.' Dr. Chalmers' wife, and one o f his daughters, with several grandchildren, were in the congregation, but, by presence of mind, escaped unhurt. The preacher, to hear whom the unusual concourse had collected, was conspicuous, and of great service, by reason of his strength and stature, in helping the imprisoned and terrified crowd below the galleries to escape by the windows. The event doubtless laid a severe hold upon his sensitive nature, and aggravated the effects of private sorrow and public strife.

The Church and the Sacraments.

The Homilies on Baptism were not more remarkable for the peculiar doctrine of that sacrament which they were designed to set forth, than for their incidental indications of an equally peculiar doctrine of the Church. I mean by these expressions—'remarkable' and 'peculiar'—not that there was anything strictly novel or uncommon in either doctrine; but that their enunciation by a Protestant, Presbyterian, Calvinistic preacher, might naturally startle the ill-informed and shock the narrow-minded. Of baptism, the Homilies taught—that it is no mere decent ceremony, but a sacred symbol; and more, not a barren sign, but an operative mystery; that it not only initiates its subjects into the church, but that its

subjects constitute the church ;—that *it*, not conversion, is the beginning of spiritual life, and, therefore, of an ecclesiastical existence ; that nevertheless, from the sins forgiven at baptism the baptized may need to be converted, lest he perish in them ; that he differs from the unbaptized in enjoying the help of the Holy Ghost, but also in the terrible ability to thrust from him that aid—but that, if he be of the elect, as well as of the baptized, the influences of the Spirit will prove resistless, his perseverance certain, his salvation complete. In Homily the first, the preacher uses language very similar to that heard from Tractarian pulpits :—'For as when we are born of our naural parents the seeds of a corrupt nature are thereby conveyed to us,—so, when we are baptized into Christ, the seeds of a spiritual nature are thereby conveyed to us : otherwise it were vain to hope that there could be any fruit of holiness yielded to our husbandry of prayer, faith, and instruction. Baptism, declaring the child's natural deadness and inherent corruptness, placeth a bar against all dealing with the child; for who laboureth upon the dead? This bar it must remove, otherwise it were the inlet to no good hopes or painful labours of faith and love. If it declareth spiritual death, it must also declare spiritual life, or be utterly ruinous to all purposes and endeavours after holiness. . . No man can take upon him to separate the effectual working of the Holy Spirit from baptism, without making void all the ordinances of the visible church ; which become idle ceremonies, or worse, save for the faith that the Holy Spirit may be

and is in them of a truth, to all to whom the Father granted the faith of his presence in them.' I suppose the Tractarian would have stopped at the last comma in this last sentence — certainly, what follows is Calvinistic :—' On the other hand, no one may connect the Holy Spirit absolutely and necessarily with the administration of baptism ; for thereby he would take the gift out of the electing will of the Father, and the redeeming love of Christ, and fix it in an outward visible act of an ordained priest.' This seems to have the great disadvantage, in comparison with the Catholic doctrine, of making dependent upon the faith of parents, or sponsors, the result which the latter connects inseparably with the due ordination of the priest; but, in Homily the Eighth, we read :— ' Because many children are wont to puzzle and perplex themselves about the question, whether their parents had faith or not, I say positively, that they take too much upon themselves to go about to judge a question which hath already been judged by the church. Not that I infringe the right of private judgment, which I consider a most essential point of the Protestation which we have lifted up against the Papacy, but that I will not permit a decision to be reviewed by private judgment which God hath not left to private judgment, but fixed in the rulers of the church. Your parent did not himself take it upon his own private judgment to decide whether he was worthy to have his child baptized: he left it to the rulers of the church, into whose hands the sacraments are committed, to decide to whom they should be administered.

The church decided favourably in your case, and then the thing rested upon the church's responsibility. . . The same say I, in answer to all doubts with respect to the minister of the church by whom it was done.' But these assurances are applied only to the right of the baptized to all church privileges; and, in a summary of the whole matter, there is an emphatic denial that 'the Holy Ghost is necessarily tied to the ordinance of Baptism.'

It would seem, therefore, that Irving differed from his fellows in his appreciation of baptism, chiefly because of his higher appreciation of the church as a visible institution—an authority, as well as an administrator. His appeal is constantly to its standards and fathers. He occupies a hundred and thirty pages with an excerpt from the 'Ecclesiastical Polity' of his favourite Hooker, and patristic 'Confirmations' of Hooker's doctrine. He sees the working of infidelity to the essential ideas of Christianity, in the laxity of men's notions touching church relations; and in the machinery which the 'religious world, as it well nameth itself,' substitutes for church action—'their endless, and often prayerless, committees; their multitudinous, and often unhallowed, meetings; their hustings and hustings'-like harangues; their numerous travellers upon commission; their flaming, and often fallacious, reports; with all the hurry, haste, and bustle of the evangelical and methodistical machinery.'

The Church and the State.

If the church should thus include the whole Christian life of a community, what can be its relation to the civil constitution of that community? The difficulty is not less than that of the just relation of the church to the

individual rights of its members. Irving felt the difficulty—and devoted to its elucidation a volume which might have been considerably successful in that aim if it had not taken the form of a commentary on Daniel's Vision of the Four Beasts. The title of this volume is, 'The Church and State Responsible to Christ, and to One Another.' The doctrine of the book is contained—after the author's convenient custom—in the Dedication; and is expressed by citations from the Scottish and Westminster Confessions:—

'The doctrines which I have taught in these discourses, concerning the responsibility of the kingdom and of the church, is the constant doctrine which hath been taught from the days of the Apostles until now, and which is embodied everywhere in the standards of our church. Of kings, I have taught, that they are the lieutenants of God, in whose sessions God himself doth sit and judge. . . that they are appointed not only for civil policy, but also for the maintenance of the true religion, and for suppressing of all idolatry and superstition whatsoever, as it is written in the Scottish Confession of Faith, Art. xxiv. I have taught, also, according to the Second Book of Discipline, chap. x, that kings may "not usurp anything that pertains not to the civil sword, but belongs to the offices that are merely ecclesiastical, as is the ministry of the Word and Sacraments, using ecclesiastical discipline, and the spiritual execution thereof, or any part of the power of the spiritual keys, which our Master gave to the Apostles and to their true successors." I have taught that, the "civil magistrate hath authority, and it is his

duty, to take order, that unity and peace be preserved in the church; . . for the better effecting whereof, he hath power to call synods—to be present at them—and *to provide that whatever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God.*" (Westminster Confession, chap. xxxiii.) 'These ancient heads of doctrine I have maintained against the modern innovations of schismatics and politicians, who teach that the civil magistrate hath his power and dignity from the people, and not from Christ; and ruleth for the people, and not for Christ; and that it is an evil thing for the state to establish the church, or in any way to seek to promote one form of religion rather than another.' How the civil ruler is to make himself an interpreter of 'the mind of God,' without intruding into the 'offices that are merely ecclesiastical,' I am quite unable to perceive. Equally unable am I to reconcile the author's care to prove—from the aforesaid Confessions—that it is the duty of the ruler to suppress, at the requirement of the church, heresy and superstition, with his expression of thankfulness that, in his own case, the 'law permitteth not the persecution of spoliation and of blood, though it preventeth not the persecution of slander and falsehood;' implying that else the 'brethren,' who assail him with these weapons of the tongue, would set in motion against him the sword of the state. As I read it, the whole volume is a review of historic testimony to the evil of the connexion of church and state; and the concluding discourse is a formal protest against the confounding of kingly and priestly functions. In that discourse we read:—'The state hath to do with all

things which concern the visible; the church, with all things which concern the invisible. Everything which is under the organ of sight, belongeth to the king; everything which is under the organ of faith, belongeth to the church. The church cannot lay a finger upon a man to harm his person, but instantly Christ is offended in the person of the king: the king cannot lay a finger upon the faith or discipline of the church, but instantly Christ is offended in His church. . . . It hath ever been the artifice of Satan—his great manœuvre of state, alas! too successful—to unite these two offices in one.' But what of those whom the church may have excommunicated, or who may have forsaken her? Our author's reply exposes the unreality of his whole argument:—'The righteous retort, on the part of the state, towards such contumelious members of the church is, to refuse them confidence and to deprive them of places of trust; for why advance into trustful places under Christ those whom the church of Christ have deemed schismatical?' A theory based on the resemblance of Christ to Melchizedec, and the consummation of existing relationships in a Messianic millennium, results in the impracticable distinction of penalties from disabilities.

The Catholic Question.

It was, I suspect, much less a theological aversion to Romanism, or an intellectual inability to perceive that the theory just noticed would have as logically required the absorption of national churches in the Catholic Church, as of sects into establishments—much less these, than an unconscious anxiety to act out his own interpretation

of unfulfilled prophecy, which impelled Mr. Irving, sorely against his will, into agitation against the Catholic claims; which were now ripe for legislative adjustment. In 1826, he published 'Babylon and Infidelity Foredoomed,' to clear himself from the imputation of being 'a political partizan in a ministerial garb.' By the summer of 1829, he had written a second volume on the Vision of Daniel, commenced the publication of a course of lectures on the Apocalypse, originated—or helped to originate—the 'Morning Watch; a Quarterly Journal of Prophecy, and Theological Review, and published a Letter to the King, besides tracts, petitions, and other missives common to religious and political warfare. It would be as little interesting and useful to reproduce here arguments and warnings urged without effect, as to reprint a page of the 'Old Almanack' so much talked of then. We will conclude, therefore, our notice of these 'Controversies' with an amusing, but not unimpressive, personal reminiscence.

When the Catholic Relief Bill had entered its final stage, Mr. Irving determined to address a remonstrance to the King against giving it the royal assent. The document is said to have been a masterpiece of objurgatory composition. Accompanied by two of the heads of his congregation, its author presented himself, according to appointment, at the Home-office. They were ushered into an antechamber, in which were a number of such miscellaneous personages as are ever haunting the outer rooms of Downing-street. Having waited about ten minutes,

Edward Irving in Downing-street.

Mr. Irving proposed to his elders that they should pray for grace in the eyes of the ruler, and for a blessing to accompany their petition. One can easily conceive the amazement of a company of place-hunters and officials on beholding the gaunt and almost grotesque figure of Edward Irving upon his knees, pouring out a fervid prayer for the king and country. When the deputation had risen, and were admitted to the presence of the gentleman commissioned by Mr. Secretary Peel to receive them, he would have taken the petition at once. But Mr. Irving, putting himself into one of those imposing attitudes which his limbs assumed as readily as his tongue moved itself to speak, begged the honourable gentleman to hear first a word of admonition. He then commenced reading and commenting on the petition, and addressed himself to the secretary's heart and conscience with words and gestures that made him pale and tremble. At length he released his unwilling auditor, on his giving an assurance that the memorial should certainly reach the throne.

There were yet other controversies that Irving had to fight, ere he put off the armour for ever, to assume the 'singing garments' that so much better became his noble nature. But as these last battles were fought out in another and more conspicuous arena than that of mere discussion, we must lift the leaf, and afford to them proportioned space.

CHAPTER IX.

HERESY AND SUPERNATURALISM.

AGAIN it must be notified that these chapter-headings are designed rather to indicate than to characterize. Not for himself does the writer presume to decide between Mr. Irving and his impugners as to what is or is not the 'Catholic and Orthodox Doctrine of our Lord's Human Nature'—nor is he quite prepared to affirm the presence of the strictly supernatural in certain extraordinary religious phenomena which Mr. Irving so accepted. An impartial narrative of the progress of the controversy on these points is all that will be here attempted; leaving the argument to develope itself. And, perhaps, ere the narrative is concluded, the reader will agree with the author—that while either question is too profoundly psychological for decision in the present imperfect state of that science, there was nothing to be blamed, and little to be regretted, on either side, but the enthusiasm which exaggerates, the irreverence that reviles, and that

relentlessly schismatic spirit which insisted on rending afresh the 'seamless garb of Christian unity.'

In an ordination discourse delivered in March, 1827, Mr. Irving confesses that though only five years had he preached in London, he was set down as having 'boxed the whole compass of heresy.' It was not, however, till some months later that he was first publicly impeached of the 'heresy' for which he was to suffer the heaviest of ecclesiastical penalties. In the summer of the above-named year, he preached for a newly-formed 'Gospel Tract' Distribution Society a discourse in which strangers detected the doctrine of the 'sinful humanity of Christ.' It required less of acuteness than of candour to perceive that this was the sum of Irving's difference from the self-styled orthodox—that whereas they assert that the nature of Jesus was exempt from the taint of hereditary sin, Irving contended for His perfect oneness in nature with all mankind, His actual sinlessness being the triumphant result of incarnated Divinity. Pitiable as it may seem, on this scarcely appreciable diversity of belief, volumes were to be written, and a fierce warfare of three years maintained; ending in poor Irving's censure by the Presbytery of London, expulsion from the noble edifice reared by his friends—the beautiful sanctuary in which, as he touchingly said, he had 'baptized and buried his babes'—and even excommunication from the loved and extolled church of his fatherland!—The Rev. H. Cole, a clergyman unattached, was the first to raise the hue and cry of 'Heretic!' According to his published

The doctrine of our Lord's humanity.

letter to Mr. Irving, he entered the Caledonian church one Sunday evening in October, as he was 'returning home rather early from his own place of worship,' hoping to ascertain, personally, whether the minister 'really did hold the awful doctrine of the sinfulness of Christ's human nature.' Mr. Cole heard enough, in a few minutes, further to alarm his sensibilities; and to induce him to ask an interview with the preacher. The interview, courteously granted, seemed only to confirm the clergyman's apprehensions, and an appeal to the religious newspapers followed. Mr. Irving appears to have made no reply—but in the following year he issued from the press his 'Sermons, Lectures, and Occasional Discourses.' The first of these three volumes consisted exclusively of sermons on the Incarnation; and in the preface Mr. Irving wrote:—'The Sermons on the Incarnation were intended to open that mystery after a dogmatical, and not a controversial, method; as being designed for the instruction of the church committed to my ministerial and pastoral care, of whom I knew not that any one entertained a doubt upon that great head of Christian faith. . . When I had completed this office of my ministry, and, by the request of my flock, had consented to the publication of these and the other discourses contained in this book; and when the printing of them had all but, or altogether concluded; there arose, I say not by what influence of Satan, a great outcry against the doctrine which, with all orthodox churches, I hold and maintain concerning the person of Christ. . . The stir which was made in divers quarters, both of this and

my native land, about this matter, as if it were neither the orthodox doctrine of the church nor a doctrine according to godliness, shewed me, who am convinced of both, that it was necessary to take controversial weapons in my hand, and contend earnestly for the faith as it was once delivered to the saints. I perceived now, that the dogmatical method which I had adopted for the behoof of my own believing flock, would not be sufficient when publishing to a wavering, gainsaying, or unbelieving people; and, therefore, it seemed to me most profitable to delay the publication until I should have composed something fitted to re-establish men's minds upon this great fundamental doctrine of the church—which, having done, I resolved to insert the same as two other sermons; the one upon the method of the Incarnation, and the other upon the relations of the Creator and the creature, as they are shown out in the light of the Incarnation. And for this timeous interruption by evil tongues, I desire to give thanks to God, inasmuch as I have been enabled thereby not only to expound, but to defend, the faith, that the Son of God came in the flesh.'

'The point at issue,' he adds, 'is simply this—Whether Christ's flesh had the grace of sinlessness and incorruption from its proper nature, or from the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. I say the latter.'

This opinion, now that it was impugned, Mr. Irving maintained with his accustomed fervour and industry. The first number of the 'Morning Watch' contained a copious exposition and defence of the doctrine, evidently from his pen. In a visit to Scotland, performed

in May, 1829, he preached it, not only from the pulpits to which he was invited, but—according to the local newspapers—to open-air congregations of ten and twelve thousand persons; as at Holywood and Dunscorse, near Dumfries. These propagandist labours provoked a 'Refutation' from Mr. J. A. Haldane; to which Mr. Drummond replied; Mr. Haldane, of course, making a rejoinder. In January, 1830, appeared 'a tract' of one hundred and fifty pages from the untiring pen of our hero—with what result we shall presently witness. But, at this moment, the history must glide into the second division of this chapter.

The supernaturalism of which we have now to speak is the appearance, in Mr. Irving's congregation, of persons speaking in an 'unknown tongue,' professedly by the power of the Holy Ghost. This extraordinary spiritual phenomenon did not originate in that congregation, but with some ladies resident at Port Glasgow. The mental condition out of which it arose was just then a very common one in the religious world, and is not without parallel in ecclesiastical history—namely, despair of the world's conversion by the ordinary methods of evangelization; and the desire of supernatural manifestations as a prelude to the Lord's second advent. To this despondency Irving's experience naturally inclined him—for he had appealed comparatively in vain both to rich and poor. His syren song of religious and social revival, the sons of Mammon and Belial no longer flocked to hear. 'The gum-flowers of Almack's,' as is said by Carlyle,

The 'Unknown Tongues.'

refused to be made 'living roses in the garden of God.' Fashion had gone, her idle way, to gaze on Egyptian crocodiles, Iroquois hunters, or what else there might be; forgetting this man—who, unhappily, could not in his turn forget.' Even the Jews of Whitechapel pelted him when he descended to preach to them in the Tenter-ground; while Christian bodies anathematized or lamented him as a heretic. So far back as in his Missionary Oration, as we observed at the time, he hinted his disposition to believe that neither the four-fold ministry nor the spiritual gifts of the apostolic age, were peculiar thereto; but had lapsed only through the unfaithfulness of the Church. In his Homilies on Baptism, he taught that that sacrament involved responsibility for 'the full and perfect gift of the Holy Ghost.' When, therefore, in the spring of 1830, he heard of Scottish women speaking as did the Twelve on the day of Pentecost, he suspected no travestie of that wondrous story, but felt only hope and thankfulness. He despatched an elder to inquire into the thing, who brought back a good report, and found the tongues of flame sitting on his own wife and daughters. Still, not rashly nor arrogantly was the marvel proclaimed to the world. For some time, only in private meetings was the 'gift' invited to manifest itself. There, philological learning pronounced the utterances something more than jargon, and observation failed to detect imposture. In the autumn of the year, prayer-meetings were held so early as half-past six every morning, at the church in Regent Square, and were numerously attended. At these meetings, says one

narrator, 'I frequently heard exhortations from two individuals—one, the brother, who continued to speak; the other, a sister, who, as hereafter explained, has discontinued her perorations; for such the conclusions in English appeared to me to be, as connected with the "TONGUE," which invariably preceded them, and which at first I did not comprehend; because it burst forth from the former with an astonishing and terrible crash, so suddenly, and in such short sentences, that I seldom recovered the shock before the English commenced; and as the latter always chanted, it became difficult to discriminate the tongue from the English; nevertheless I was enabled to observe many pious and prophetic expressions . . . uttered in a tone of power and authority from the brother, or of plaintive and affectionate admonition from the sister.' In these utterances, the pestilence which invaded this land in the following summer was distinctly predicted as a Divine judgment. The prediction was noticed by Mr. Irving, as president of these singular assemblies, with 'deference and gratitude.' The 'brother' who had been the organ of the supposed Divine communication, was thenceforth regarded as 'the mouth of the congregation;' and for some time he daily forewarned and admonished them. On Saturday (October 15th), after an exposition by Mr. Irving of the apostolic injunction that women keep silence in the church, three 'sisters' (of the family of the elder who had gone to Port Glasgow) spoke as prophetesses. Thus far these utterances had been confined to the early morning prayer-meetings. But on Sunday morning (October

the 16th) another 'sister' burst forth in the open congregation, with an utterance in the 'tongue.' Mr. Irving calmed the fifteen hundred or two thousand people that had risen in alarm, bade the sister console herself—for she had struggled with the power that had possession of her, and hastened into the vestry of the church, there to give it speech—and expounded the 14th chapter of the 1st epistle of the Corinthians, as explanatory of the occurrence. In the evening a 'brother' produced even greater excitement than the morning speaker. And in the course of the week all London was talking of this new phase in the career of its once favourite preacher.

The feelings they excited.

Gossip, ridicule, wonder, enquiry—all had ample food provided by the continuance of these things throughout the following year. The events transacting on the continent and at home—a revolutionary dynasty on the throne of France; Belgium struggling to break its unnatural bond with Holland, and Poland to get from under the foot of Russia; a fierce political agitation shaking the most ancient institutions of England; and cholera, for the first time, unfolding its death-shedding wings over the land; everywhere change, strife, and terror—seemed to give added volume and pungency to these voices that would at any time have been solemn enough, however incredible. Of course, fools mocked; of course, the pen of the witling and the pencil of the caricaturist were ready to do the work of scorn; and of course, that worst of folly and bitterest of scorn—religious prejudice—denounced as the delusion of Satan what

worldlings were content to revile as the inspiration of fanaticism. But that a Dr. Arnold thought it no indignity to reason to ask if really the Judgment were at hand, we have on record;* and that men who consorted with the highest literati of Britain deemed the thing not unworthy an effort to understand it, is evinced by the appearance in 'Fraser's Magazine'—side by side with Thomas Carlyle's Notices of the Baron von Goethe and the like—of articles contributed by Mr. Irving, at urgent request, as a recital of 'Facts connected with the Recent Manifestations of Spiritual Gifts.' The unaffected stateliness and beauty of the style in which those papers are written — though written under circumstances intensely harassing, as we shall presently see—would alone entitle them to entire transcript here, did space permit. As space does not permit anything like an entire transcript, the best must be done to preserve the facts and to exemplify the style in which they are narrated.

How they originated.

The narrative is preluded by a description of the mental process by which the writer and his people were prepared for the marvels they were about to witness—'the full preaching of Christ's coming in our flesh, and His coming again in glory. . . I had not made sure to my own mind, nor taught my people to look or to pray for the restoration of the spiritual gifts; but confined myself to the confession of our sins and the sins of our fathers, for which they had ceased, and to the bewailing of our low and abject state before the Lord. Thus we stood,

* Arnold's Life and Correspondence: Letter xxxviii.

when the tidings of the restoration of the gift of tongues in the west of Scotland burst upon us like the morning star heralding the approach of day, and turned our speculations upon the true doctrine into the examination of a fact.' 'I did rejoice with great joy, when the tidings were read to me, coming through a most authentic channel, that the bridal attire and jewels of the Church had been found again.'

The Rev. J. A. Scott—a man widely revered as a master in all learning, and especially as a teacher of religious truth; and envied to Manchester, by many in London, as the Principal of its Owen's College—was, up to the middle of 1830, the missionary of the Caledonian Church in Regent Square, to the poor of the city; and was thus in close contact with Edward Irving—one of whose felicities it was to draw about him spiritual excellence of every sort. Mr. Scott appears to have been more decided than his more eminent friend 'on this head;' indeed, to have *expected* what the latter only desired. Towards the end of 1829, he was on a visit to his father in the west of Scotland; and was 'led to open his mind to some of the godly in those parts, and among others to a young woman who was at that time lying ill of a consumption, from which afterwards, when brought to the very door of death, she was raised up instantaneously by the mighty hand of God. Being a woman of a very fixed and constant spirit, he was not able, with all his power of statement and argument, which is unequalled by that of any man I have ever met with, to convince her of the distinction between regeneration

and baptism with the Holy Ghost; and when he could not prevail, he left her with a solemn charge to read over the Acts of the Apostles with that distinction in her mind, and to beware how she rashly rejected what he believed to be the truth of God. By this young woman it was that God, not many months after, did restore the gift of speaking with tongues and prophesying to the church.' In the intervening months a remarkable mental change was accomplished. The study of Scripture produced the conviction which Mr. Scott, albeit unsurpassed in 'powers of statement and argument,' had failed to produce. The young woman who was the subject of this conversion, had actually come to 'conceive the purpose of a mission to the heathen,' and wrote long letters for the persuasion of others to that purpose. It was on a Sunday evening—'sometime between the 23rd of March, 1830, and the end of that month'—that, through her, the gift of speaking with tongues was restored to the church. "Then he restored that which he took not away." (Isa. lxix.) The handmaiden of the Lord, of whom He made choice on that night to manifest forth in her His glory, had been long afflicted with a disease which the medical men pronounced to be a decline, and that it would soon bring her to the grave, whither her sister had been hurried by the same malady some months before. Yet, while all around were anticipating her dissolution, she was, in the strength of faith, meditating missionary labours among the heathen; and this night she was to receive the preparation of the spirit—the preparation

of the body she received not till some days after. It was on the Lord's-day; and one of her sisters, along with a female friend, who had come to the house for that end, had been spending the whole day in humiliation, and fasting, and prayer before God, with a special respect to the restoration of the gifts. They had come up in the evening to the sick chamber of their sister, who was laid on a sofa—and, along with one or two others of the household, they were engaged in prayer together. When in the midst of their devotion, the Holy Ghost constrained her to speak at great length, and with superhuman strength, in an unknown tongue, to the astonishment of all who heard; and to her own great edification and enjoyment in God; "for he that speaketh in a tongue edifieth himself." She has told me that this first seizure of the Spirit was the strongest she ever had; and that it was in some degree necessary it should have been so, otherwise she would not have dared to give way to it. For once, "the spirit of the prophets was [not] subject to the prophets." It was so also the first time that silence was broke in my church. I have put the question directly, and been answered by the person who was raised for that purpose, that she never had so strong an impulse; which, thinking to restrain, she fled out of the church into the vestry, but found it quite irresistible, and was forced to give vent to that volume of majestic sound which passed through two closed doors, and filled the whole church. And so, according to the example of Scripture, it ought to be;' . . . .

Here the narrative is arrested for the citation of proofs that this new manifestation of spiritual power was essentially identical with the manifestations recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. These we pass over, that we may have room for the writer's description of it, 'according to the forms in which I have seen it exhibited hundreds of times' [this was written in February, 1832]; with which description is interwoven, too closely to be separated, the expression of his own deep emotion and not unreasoning belief:—

'From these words of the Apostle Paul (1 Cor. xiv. 6) —"Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?"—it would seem that there be four forms or uses of speaking with tongues; the first, for revealing things hidden in the Word, concerning which we have much information in the second chapter of this epistle; the second, for bringing to the knowledge of the church things which are taking place beyond the reach of ordinary communication, whereof we have many instances in the life of Christ, which was the complete manifestation of the Holy Ghost; the third, for prophesying to the edification and comfort and exhortation of the church, for the conviction and judgment, heart-searching and conversion, of the unbeliever, concerning which the fourteenth chapter of the epistle above quoted is chiefly written; the fourth, for doctrine, or teaching of those things which belong to the first principles and daily practice

Their nature and manner.

of the Christian life—a gift proper to the office of the pastor or teacher. . . To these four forms of communication this gift of tongues was subservient, not so much to convey the intelligible matter, which it never could do in the church, save when the gift of interpretation was also vouchsafed, as to show that the person speaking from revelation, or from knowledge, or from prophesying, or from doctrine, was not speaking of himself, but by the Holy Ghost. Therefore, he is set on to speak in a tongue "which no man understandeth," which speaketh "not unto men but unto God," and comes out of that state into intelligible speech with an utterance which you thereby know to proceed from the same hidden and invisible power which uttered the words unknown. That this is the case is manifest to the observer, and it is made sure by asking the speaker, who always declareth that the words uttered in English are as much by power supernatural, and by the same power supernatural, as the words uttered in the language unknown. But no one hearing and observing the utterance, could for a moment doubt it; inasmuch as the whole utterance, from the beginning to the ending of it, is with a power, and strength, and fulness, and sometimes rapidity of voice, altogether different from that of the person's ordinary utterance in any mood; and I would say, both in its form and in its effects upon a simple mind, quite supernatural. There is a power in the voice to thrill the heart and overawe the spirit after a manner which I have never felt. There is a march, and a majesty, and a sustained grandeur in the voice,

especially of those who prophecy, which I have never heard even a resemblance to, except now and then in the sublimest and most impassioned moods of Mrs. Siddons and Miss O'Neil. It is a mere abandonment of all truth to call it screaming or crying: it is the most majestic and divine utterance which I have ever heard, some parts of which I never heard equalled, and no part of it surpassed, by the finest execution of genius and of art exhibited at the oratorios in the Concerts of Ancient Music. And when the speech utters itself in the way of a psalm or spiritual song, it is the likest to some of the most simple and ancient chants in the cathedral service; insomuch that I have been often led to think that those chants, of which some can be traced up as high as the days of Ambrose, are recollections and transmissions of the inspired utterances in the primitive church. Most frequently, the silence is broken by utterance in a tongue, and this continues for a longer or a shorter period; sometimes occupying only a few words, as it were filling the first gust of sound; sometimes extending to five minutes, or even more, of earnest and deeply-felt discourse, with which the heart and soul of the speaker is manifestly much moved, to tears, and sighs, and unutterable groanings; to joy, and mirth, and exultation; and even laughter of the heart. So far from being unmeaning gibberish, as the thoughtless and heedless sons of Belial have said, it is regularly formed, well-proportioned, deeply-felt discourse, which evidently wanteth only the ear of him whose native tongue it is to make it a very masterpiece of powerful speech. But

as the Apostle declareth that it is not spoken to the ear of man, but to the ear of God—"he that speaketh in a tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God; for no man understandeth" (1 Cor. xiv. 2)—we ought to stand in awe, and endeavour to enter into spiritual communion with that member of Christ who is the mouth of the whole church unto God. . . .

'But, say they, of what use to listen to that which we understand not? The answer is manifold: to him who uttereth, it is very useful; "for he that speaketh in a tongue, edifieth himself," through the speech, "though the understanding be unfruitful;" and thou oughtest to rejoice in thy brother's edification, especially if in a few seconds, or minutes, he is about to edify thee with a message brought from God. Useful, brother? It is most useful for thee, in order to get the better of thine unbelief and irreverence—to abate thy trust in thine understanding, by shewing thee a thing which thou canst not enter into—to make thee feel and acknowledge a present God speaking by His Spirit—to make sure unto thee the union of Christ with His people, speaking in them and by them; not as empty instruments, but as conscious spiritual creatures. Ah me! it is the standing symbol of the "communion of the saints, and their fellowship with the Father and the Son;" not by means of intelligence, but by means of the Holy Ghost. But because intellect cannot grasp it, intellect would dash it to the ground, and deny that there is a spirit in man deeper than the intellect—that there is a Holy Ghost binding God to Jesus, and Jesus to the church, and the church

with one another, and back again to God. The unknown part of the discourse is the symbol of the fountain secret, unseen, and unknown—the known part, of the stream which issues from the fountain to cherish the life of all creatures. Doth a man refuse to drink of the clear flowing stream, because he knows not the hidden and secret cavern within the bowels of the earth from which it hath flowed out? Ah! what a miscreant generation it is, and what misdeeds they have done, under the sight of these sorrowful eyes! I have seen God's sanctuaries profaned, God's mysteries gazed on and laughed at, God's gentle and entreating voice set at nought—all because it issued from a fountain of unknown speech which they could not understand. In their ignorance, they understand not that all which is known issueth from the unknown, in order that all knowledge may lead us to all worship.

'"When I am praying in my native tongue," said one of the gifted persons to me, "however fixed my soul be upon God, and Him only, I am conscious to other thoughts and desires, which the very words I use force in before me. I am like a man holding straight forward to his home, full in view, who, though he diverge neither to the right hand nor to the left, is ever solicited by the many well-known objects on every hand of him. But the moment I am visited with the Spirit, and carried out to God in a tongue which I know not, it is as if a deep covering of snow had fallen on all the country round, and I saw nothing but the object of my desire and the road which leadeth unto it. I am more conscious than ever to the presence of God.

He, and He only, is in my soul. I am filled with some form of the mind of God, be it joy or grief, desire, love, pity, compassion, wrath, or indignation; and I am made to utter it in words which are full of power over my spirit; but not being accessible to my understanding, my devotion is not interrupted by associations or suggestions from the visible or intellectual world: I feel myself, as it were, shut in with God unto his own pavillion and hidden close from the invasions of the world, the devil, and the flesh." In these few words, the mystery and the end of the gift of tongues are accurately set forth.

'In the same breath, in perfect continuance, sometimes in constant sequences, as word followeth word in common discourse, sometimes with such a pause as the speaker makes to take his breath, the English part flows forth in the same fulness of voice, majesty of tone, and grandeur of utterance. This is that with which we have properly to do—God and the speaker with the other: and as God speaketh in the church for edification, this is always the largest part; four times, or ten times, or even twenty times as much being known as is unknown. The unknown is, so far as concerneth us, the sign that the known is a message from God, prophesying under the power of the Spirit, speaking as one is moved by the Holy Ghost—and not any offering of the enlightened and pious mind for the benefit of the brethren—that it is Jesus, the Head of the church, occupying the speech and using the tongue of His servant, to speak the things which He desireth at that time to be spoken and heard. Wherein the person is

not used as a trumpet merely for speaking through, but as an intelligent, conscious, loving, holy creature, to be possessed in these his inward parts, and used by the Lord of All, the in-dwelling Head of the church. He yieldeth his will unto Jesus, to be used thus in his act of faith, self-resigning; and Jesus, using his will, doth, through the spirit and by the tongue of the man, utter forth what words He pleaseth to utter. In uttering the unknown, and in uttering the known part of the prophesying, he is equally and alike under the power of Jesus until the word comes forth—in both cases, equally conscious in his speech to the thing which is uttered; filled with the joy or grief, with the love or hatred, with the entreaty, or reproof, or indignation; in one word, with the spirit of it. There is no difference in the state of the speaker; he is equally unconscious, equally unintelligent, equally possessed, and equally consenting to be possessed—aye, and until the word be uttered, he can refuse his will, and so quench the Spirit; or, being commanded by those who have the rule over him, he can cease to give his will, and so resist the largeness of the Spirit's utterance. He is all the while pleasing or offending Jesus; and Jesus hath delight, and the church profit, in him accordingly; he himself, satisfaction and clearness of conscience in the use of his gift. But the work of responsibility is entirely confined to the spirit or will of the person, which is, in fact, the only seat of responsibility; the mind, the understanding, and the feeling, or, as it is commonly called, the heart, being only a serving creature—a thing of the flesh, without which the spirit shall exist

in the separate state—with which the spirit hath nothing to do but to keep it to its work, and entreat it kindly—from which the spirit is as widely separated as God is from the dust. God is the fountain of the spirit, the dust the origin of the fleshly creature. I am not writing metaphysically, but describing a reality; yet such a reality as hath given me more insight into metaphysics than all books which I have read, and all lectures which I have heard. It seems to me always to realise the views of man's being that I was wont to hear from the mouth of that most gifted philosopher and most profound thinker, our dear Coleridge, whom may the Lord abundantly bless in the decline of his days! as he hath blessed me with more instruction than any other uninspired man, living or dead.'

There is nothing further noticeable in these extraordinary contributions to a literary magazine, but the circumstance that of all who, within the observation of the writer, exercised the gift of tongues, 'the females alone have it in the form of prophesying alone; the men have it in all the four forms mentioned by Paul.' This, too, is shown to be 'according to the Scriptures;' and that provision has been made, in 'the practice of all churches using a liturgy,' for the speaking of women by the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER X

THE LESSER AND GREATER EXCOMMUNICATIONS.

ECCLESIASTICAL corporations are usually very coward: they rarely strike direct at the real object of their suspicion or dislike, but at some lesser object. In the case of Mr. Irving, action was first taken against the Rev. J. A. Scott, and the Rev. Mr. Maclean. The latter gentleman, Mr. Irving had assisted to induct into the ministry of London Wall Caledonian Church—for the former, his influence had obtained a similar post at Woolwich. Mr. Scott was refused ordination by the Presbytery of London—a body consisting of seven ministers, and seven laymen; which had previously censured, timidly, and without result, Mr. Irving's book on the Human Nature of Christ—and Mr. Maclean was refused by the synod of Glasgow and Ayr induction to the parish of Dreghorn, to which he had been presented. Mr. Scott appears to have quietly retired—but Mr. Maclean appealed to the General Assembly, and was successful

Messrs. Maclean and Scott.

on a technical point. The frequent reference, in these proceedings, to Mr. Irving, made it impossible that he should be any longer excepted from impeachment. His trial, on a charge of heresy, was, however, anticipated by complaint of irregularity preferred in March, 1832, by certain of the trustees of the church in Regent Square to the Presbytery of London.

The document in which this complaint is preferred, after reciting the provisions of the trust-deed, alleges:—

Mr. Irving indicted for breach of discipline.

'Firstly, that the said Rev. Edward Irving has suffered and permitted, and still allows, the public services of the said church, in the worship of God on the sabbath and other days, to be interrupted by persons not being either ministers or licentiates of the Church of Scotland.

'Secondly, that the said Rev. Edward Irving has suffered, and permitted, and still allows, the public services of the said church, in the worship of God, to be interrupted by persons not being either members or seat-holders of said church; or ministers or licentiates of the Church of Scotland.

'Thirdly, that the said Rev. Edward Irving has suffered and permitted, and also publicly encourages, females to speak in the same church, and to interrupt and disturb the public worship of God in said church on sabbath and other days.

'Fourthly, that the said Rev. Edward Irving hath suffered, and permitted, and also publicly encourages, other individuals, members of the said church, to interrupt and disturb the public worship of God in the said church on sabbath and other days.

'Fifthly, that the said Rev. Edward Irving, for the purpose of encouraging and exciting the said interruptions, has appointed times when a suspension of the usual worship in the said church takes place, for said persons to exercise the supposed gifts with which they profess to be endowed.'

His private reply thereto.

In the correspondence which had preceded the formal prosecution of these charges, Mr. Irving had pointed out, that in the trust-deed of his church the provision that 'all matters relating to the public worship of God in the said church or chapel, and the administration of such religious rites, ordinances, and services as should be performed therein, should be left to the discretion of the minister for the time being;' and he endeavoured to show that the observances he had introduced were quite accordant with the Books of Discipline of the Church of Scotland. On the former point, the trustees obtained high legal opinion; which Mr. Irving having read, he replied:—'The principle on which I have acted is to preserve the integrity of my ministerial character unimpaired, and to fulfil my office according to the word of God. If the trust-deed do fetter me therein, I knew it not when the trust-deed was drawn, and am sure that it never was intended in the drawing of it. For, certainly, I would not, to possess all the churches of this land, bind myself one iota from obeying the Great Head and Bishop of the Church. But, if it be so, that you, the trustees, must act to prevent me and my flock from assembling to worship God according to the Word of God in the house committed

into your trust, we will look unto our God for preservation and safe keeping. Farewell! may the Lord have you in his holy keeping.'

The trustees then submitted to the Presbytery, whether Mr. Irving had not 'departed from the obligation he came under' when ordained a minister, and ought not to be removed from the ministry of the National Scotch Church. It was on the 26th of April that the Presbytery met for the trial of this complaint, and Mr. Irving attended, with a great number of his friends, on his defence. Several persons—previously sworn before a Master in Chancery—were examined as to the occurrences alleged by the complainants. One of these witnesses was 'a gifted person;' and his examination is worth transcribing, for its agreement with what Mr. Irving had written as to the mode of these manifestations—perhaps, also, as an indication of the temper in which the inquiry was conducted. The witness having stated that *he* 'had never spoken in the Scotch church, but the Spirit of the Lord had spoken by him, both in the known and unknown tongues,' these questions and answers followed:—

Examination of witnesses.

'Have you never spoken in that church but by the Spirit of God?—Not by permission, sir.—Have you never spoken by another spirit?—It was testified to me once by a sister that I was tempted to rebuke my pastor, not in the Spirit of God, but in another spirit.—Were you conscious of that?—Though my conscience has not altogether discerned it, I feel bound to believe it, because it was spoken.—Did you

discern any difference at that period, and at others, when you spoke by the inspiration of the Spirit of God?—If I had, sir, I should have been conscious of the temptation.—Did I understand that the distinction of the two spirits entirely depends on the testimony of another?—No, sir, it does not entirely depend on it.—Will you explain, then?—It must depend on the discernment of the person himself, as well as of another.—Did you not say you were not conscious of any difference at the time you rebuked your pastor?—If you refer to my answer, you will know.—Were you conscious?—Not at the time.—Then allow me to ask you, how you know when you speak by the Spirit of God?

'The Moderator here reminded the witness that he was upon his oath; on which he exclaimed, "I stand in the presence of my Lord, and I will answer without any fear of man. *I can* discern."

'How do you discern?—By its effect and its fruit.—How do you discern whether you are speaking by the Spirit of God or by the spirit of error?—Because I am filled with love to Christ and to His church, and have joy, and peace, and strength; and, therefore, I know it is the Spirit of the Lord.—Did you so feel after you rebuked your pastor?—I confess I did not, and that has led me more than everything else to believe I might be in error.—Then it depends entirely on your own feelings?—If you mean in respect to myself, certainly.— Could you abstain from speaking?— By quenching the Spirit, or resisting the Spirit.—Then I am to understand it is not supernatural?—You are to understand, if you are guided by what I believe, that

it is a supernatural power; for I had it not once, and I cannot exercise it when I will: I cannot will to exercise it.—Is it irresistible?—If it was irresistible, could it be resisted? Did I not answer the question before?—Then, sir, I ask you, is it not resisting the Holy Ghost when you resist speaking?—It is: I believe it is.—Do you understand the tongue in which you speak?—No, because I have not the gift of interpretation.—Do you understand when you hear others speak in the tongue?—No, I do not.—When you have thus spoken, has it been during the public services in the church?—I don't remember ever speaking but once on the Sunday.—Was that during the service?—*It was immediately after Mr. Irving finished his sermon.*'

Thus far the chairman of the complaining trustees had been the interrogator. Now the reverend president of the court struck in with an insinuation which a layman or an advocate might well have shrunk from making.

'Was it by previous arrangement in private with the Rev. Edward Irving that you spoke?—Sir, do you think we stand here knaves? I should have abhorred the idea of it!—Was it arranged that the speaking should not be till after the sermon?—Sir, it is abhorrent; I could not have entered into such arrangement had Mr. Irving been willing; but I know his heart is too pure to have proposed such a thing. Does the reverend Moderator ask, was it by any concert that I spoke at all?—No; but was it by arrangement that you were not to speak till after the sermon?—No: that was some time after.—By the answer now given the witness

recognises an arrangement afterwards made.—Not with the persons who spoke: it was his (Mr. Irving's) own arrangement.—Was it agreed that the speaking should be at given periods?—Mr. Irving never consulted at all about it: and, indeed, I said, in my own heart, Would he set bounds to the Spirit? Will the Spirit of the Lord submit just as he discerneth?—Did you hear any conversation, wherever it might happen to be, respecting the revival, or supposed revival, of those gifts, before you exercised them?—I heard of them first, but not, I believe, from Mr. Irving.'

The Defender's speech.

For more than four hours of the next day (Friday) did the accused plead in his defence. He had sought among the remains of ancient eloquence for models of Christian preaching. Now, he evidently moulded his discourse upon an Apostle's apology for the liberty of prophesying:—'It is for the name of Christ, as "Baptizer with the Holy Ghost," that I am this day called in question before this court; and it is for that name which God deemed so sacred and important as to give it to the Baptist to proclaim—which the Son of God deemed so important as not to permit his disciples to go forth to preach until they had received the substance of it—it is for that name, even the name of "Jesus, the baptizer with the Holy Ghost," that I stand here before you, Sir, and before this court, and before you all, called in question this day.' There were two lines of argument open to him—one, showing that he had not contravened the discipline of the Church of Scotland; the other, repudiating usurpation of authority on the

part of rulers in that Church. Both of these courses he pursued, and with no less acuteness than vehemence. Impatient either of his argument or his invective, the Moderator repeatedly interrupted; and, on one occasion, ordered his words to be taken down; whereupon the orator exclaimed:—'Aye, take them down! take them down! I deny it to be the doctrine of the Church of Scotland, that any minister is required to go up to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland for authority to do that which he discerneth to be his duty. It is the command of your ordination vow that you serve Jesus. You are ministers of Jesus, and not ministers of any Assembly. You are the ministers of the Word of God, and not the ministers of the standards of any Church. I abominate the doctrine. It is an Antichrist—it is the very essence of Antichrist. It is Popery in all its horrors. It hath not been endured in this land; and I believe there is still left sufficient reverence for the name of Jesus not to endure it. . . . When were the statutes of the Church made the mete and measure of preaching? The liberty of preaching, or prophesying, is the basis of all liberty; when was it ever bound up within six-and-twenty, or nine-and-thirty, articles? Never, never, since the world began; and never, never, shall it be endured. What! is it meant to be asserted that the decision of a council that sat at Westminster, in turbulent and rebellious times, is to bind up the tongue of every preacher, so that he shall preach nothing but what is therein contained? I never subscribed these articles with that view; any one that did so subscribe them, subscribed them with

a false view; and if, with that view, it is said I did subscribe them, I solemnly protest it was not so; and if any one say I must so use them, I solemnly say I will not so use them.'

These were something more than the loose words of defiance to ecclesiastical authority, which nearly every man, who falls under its censure, is ready to cast at it; asserting for himself, too late, the liberty which his own former standing denied to others. There was a basis of theory and fact on which Edward Irving could plant his foot while he thus challenged his judges. Councils of the Church he justly defined as assemblies 'like the council at Jerusalem, for settling differences as they arise;' not for taking away the free standing of the individual minister and congregation. Besides, he and the synod of his church—as we now learn—had quietly withdrawn from the Presbytery some two years before, permitting it to judge him a heretic in his absence; and the General Assembly had distinctly ruled that it could not exercise authority beyond the Tweed.* It must, therefore, have been from lingering reverence and affection for the institutions of his Church—or in the hope of winning adherents even from the bench—that he submitted to this trial, and the still more formidable trial that was to follow.

In the recapitulatory peroration of his defence, occur some sentences of prophetic foresight, couched in a strain

* Mr. Irving, on his visit to Edinburgh in May 1829, claimed to take his seat in the Assembly, either as a duly ordained minister of the Church of Scotland, or as a representative of the Burgh of Annan; but in neither capacity would the Assembly allow the claim—regarding him as only a minister *in partibus infidelium*. Yet it would appear, from a passage in Dr. Chalmers' diary already quoted (p. 189), that he had both sat and spoke in the preceding session of the Assembly.

of declamation, more eloquent than the greatest forensic orator could attain to. Thus, having pointed out that it was the tendency of the complaint against him to 'exalt trustees over the minister, and make him but a bondman,' he added—'And I warn you ministers, that if you do patronize such interference with a man acting in the spirit in which I am acting—if you do wink at, and not look these things in the face, but give these men to cast me and my flock—a flock of hundreds, and a congregation of thousands—out of that church which was built, I will say, very much on the credit of my own name—cast us out into the wide streets—you will do a thing for which the Lord will punish and chastise you in higher matters; and in this, also, in the kind in which you offend—namely, by those who have the secular care of the houses where you worship.' How this warning was fulfilled, and how unjust was the sentence they were about to pronounce, some members of that court must have felt in the year of the great disruption; when even the sanctuary from which they had expelled their illustrious brother, at the demand of non-illustrious laymen, was carried over to the communion of seceders from the venerated Kirk—hundreds of whose ministers were, in their turn, driven out from their homes and sanctuaries together. This, which the defendant could but dimly forsee (how would the clear foresight have added to the sorrow of his spirit!) he darkly threatens. 'You may not, as ministers and elders, turn aside from the matter of fact that has been certified to you, and say, We will not consider that matter at all: we will go simply by the canons of the Church of

Scotland, and see what they say on it. They say nothing on it, because they could not say anything on it, seeing there was no such thing in being. I say, go to nothing to make up a judgment on it—for even from the Holy Scriptures you may not do it. You may not do it—you cannot do it, if you fear the living God; you cannot do it if you respect men; you cannot do it if you respect your fellow citizens; you cannot do it if you respect your children; you cannot do it if you respect the Head of the Church; you cannot do it if you respect the Holy Ghost. And if you do it, I shall appear as a witness against you at the bar of the Great Judge—a witness against you that I did here this day, for four or five long hours, contend no irrelevant matter, but contend the very matter in question, that we have received the gift of the Holy Ghost into the church—that we have ordered it according to the Word of God—and that it ought not to be cast out of the church. I will appear at the bar where all secrets shall be revealed, and evidence that you shut your eyes against the thing which five hundred men of unblemished reputation are ready to affirm on any day you may appoint. Ah! if you will turn aside and say, There is nothing in the Church of Scotland for it; there is no authority for it, and we will not consider whether the thing is in Scripture or not—I tell you, *you shall be withered as a Church*—I tell you, the waters in your cisterns shall be dried up—I tell you, you shall have no pasture for your flocks—I tell you, your flocks shall pine away and die.' There is always pride and joy in suffering for conscience sake—in the endurance of hardship or

grief for the truth which has such affluence of compensation; but there was an apostolic assurance and fervour in Irving's hope of redress. 'Oh! it is a small matter to be cast out of the house; we have a habitation not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. It is a small thing to be cast out of the house: the Lord will provide us another; and if not, we are not worse off than He who taught His flock by the seashore of Gallilee, and in the fields of Judea, and on the Mount of Olives: we can betake ourselves to some of the open grounds round the city, and I can feed my flock there . . . The day is near at hand when the heavens shall open, and the Son of Man shall be seen coming in power and great glory; and when His saints shall be taken to dwell with Him before the throne. It is near at hand! Oh, it is near at hand! and we believe that this voice of the Holy Ghost hath been sent into the midst of the Church to be a witness of that speedy coming, that all people might be prepared by a voice which they could not doubt—that when you have set at naught the voice of witness which I have lifted up in the bosom of this Presbytery, and in this city, for the last five or six years—the voice of witness to the coming of Jesus, and have accounted it a fable—that the Lord, in order that they might not perish, hath sent out a voice as in the old time, that the Spirit may warn you of His coming, and lead you to Jesus, in order to receive that unction of the Holy Ghost which you are baptized into. It is a small thing to be cast out of the church, because we know that that house, that throne of glory, that temple in which God dwells,

shall soon be prepared for us—yea, in our time; and that He will come, with all His saints, to execute vengeance upon all them who fear not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. But it is a most momentous thing for you who have been betrayed into the snare of Satan, to bring up a complaint against the work of the Holy Spirit. . . . Think you, oh men! if it should be the voice of the Holy Ghost, what you are doing? Consider the possibility of it, and be not rash; consider the possibility of our averments being right; and see what you are doing! Ah! I tell you it will be an onerous day for this city, and this kingdom, in the which you do, with a stiff neck and a high hand, without examination or consideration, upon any ground or authority—even though you had the commandment of the king himself—shut that door within which the Holy Ghost hath been heard. Pause! pause! pause and reflect! You are going to set yourselves to the most terrible work to which a Presbytery ever set its hands. I must say, in honesty, that I do not see that spirit everywhere prevailing (it may prevail somewhere: I judge no man)—that spirit of looking at it in the solemn magnitude in which it truly standeth before the Judge of all. I beseech you to pause! Pause for your own sakes. Pause for the sake of this city. Pause for the sake of this land. Be wise men! Come you and hear—come and hear for yourselves. The church is open every morning; the Lord is gracious, almost every morning, to speak to us by His Spirit. The church is open many times in the week, and the Lord graciously speaketh to us. Ah! be not hard-

hearted—be not proud of mind.' Thus he went on to the end—reasoning, abjuring, beseeching. 'What I say to the Presbytery I say to every one here present. Do likewise; and fear not but that in the day of His appearing, the Lord will hide you in the secret of His pavillion, and give you for ever reverently to inquire and to know Him in His holy temple. Amen, and Amen.'

After the representative of the complaining trustees had spoken in reply—which he did but briefly, relying upon the literal establishment of the charges preferred—the court adjourned to the following Wednesday, May 2nd. At this re-assembling, the Moderator announced their willingness, as there was no appeal from their decision, to hear Mr. Irving in rejoinder.

Second speech for the defence.

This second speech which, 'after a short pause devoted to prayer,' the 'defender' proceeded to deliver, holding in his hand the 'Record' newspaper, containing a report of the complainer's reply, was not much shorter, and not a whit less powerful, than the former. It had been said, 'that he ought in honesty to have separated himself in fact from the communion he had forsaken in spirit.' To this he replies with touching dignity and simplicity, albeit with destructive force. 'Let me repress the feeling that riseth in my bosom while I repel the insinuation; for I must not speak out of the resentment of nature, but out of the charity of grace. Dishonesty! If it be such a moot point, and simple case of honesty and dishonesty, why trouble they the Presbytery to consider it? Ye trouble the Presbytery, do ye, to adjust a question of common honesty and dishonesty? It is a

great and grave question, affecting the rights of the ministers and prophets of the Christian Church; a question of the most deep and sacred importance; a question not of discipline only, but of doctrine: and is a question of doctrine, and of discipline, and of ordinance, and of personal right, to be called a question of common honesty, as if I were a knave? Ye, being the judges, ought not to have permitted the complainers thus to speak of a reverend brother, and twit me as I was twitted. Ye were quick-scented after their honour, but mine they might trample under foot: my well-known character among you ought to have protected me from this allegation . . . . It is, to me, a question of great and momentous duty, which hath cost me long, laborious, and painful thought. Was it a small matter for me, when planted the minister of a church of Christ, and secured in the possession of that house during my life, unless I should be guilty of some crime disqualifying me for the ministry, to surrender the post in which God, and the Church, and the covenants of men, had planted me, to the discontents of a few men, to the opinions of any number of men, whom I believed in my heart to be grieving both God and His Church by their rash and indiscriminate, their hasty, hardy, and unfounded judgments? Seeing they rest so much upon the trust-deed, I, also, am a party to that document, representing the Church of God, the flock of believers, and a numerous congregation, whose petition to be heard at your bar upon the issue, you have rejected. If these men be parties representing the house of stone, and brick, and

The obligations of a trust-deed.

lime, and timber, I am a party representing a flock of believers gathered unto Christ under my ministry, through whose generous contributions chiefly the house hath been both builded and upheld; and being placed as their representative in the trust-deed, I ask if it was a small matter that should move me to consent to go forth from the habitation and home of our souls, and wander, we know not whither, over this wide and wicked city, *where there is no church that will call us sister, or welcome us to an hour's shelter under their roof.* These men seem to have little knowledge of the thoughts for my flock which have exercised and wearied, and, but for our God's presence, would have overwhelmed my heart, else they would not have spoken of it as they have done, as if it were a question of private feeling, and not of great and grave responsibility before God and man. My personal right in that church never once came into my mind. The condition of my wife and young children, cast out upon the wide world, never once was spoken of amongst all the strivings which we have had together upon this question, in the kirk session and the congregation. Every one felt that the question was altogether one of a higher origin; and it doth, indeed, amaze me to hear it, now for the first time, in this presence, spoken of as a personal question merely, and the simplest of all personal questions . . . I would it had been such; neither they nor you would have been troubled with it this day. For the world is wide, and the English tongue is widely diffused over it; and I am used to live by faith, and love my calling of a Preacher of the Gospel as well as I do my calling of

a Pastor. I, also, have been tempted with the like temptation of making this a question of personal feeling. One whole day, I remember, before meeting the elders and deacons of my church upon the first breaking out of this matter, I abode in the mind of giving way to my own feelings and saying to them, "Brethren, we have abidden now for so many years in love and unity, never, or hardly once, dividing on any question, that, rather than cause divisions which I see cannot be avoided, I will take my leave of you, and betake myself to other quarters and other labours in the Church. And do you seek out for some one to come and stand in my room, to go in and out before this great people, and rule over them; for I can no longer be faithful to God, and preserve the body in peace and unity. I cannot find it in my heart to grieve you: let me alone and entreat me not: I will go and preach the gospel in other parts, whither God may call me." In this mood, which these men would call honest and honourable, but which I call selfish and treacherous to my Lord and Master, I did abide for the greater part of the most important day of my life, whereof the evening was to determine this great question. But the Lord shewed me before the hour came—He shewed me, with whom alone I took council in the secret place of my own heart, that I was not a private man, to do what liked me best, but the pastor of a church, to consider their well-being, and a minister of Christ, to whom I must render an account of my stewardship. . . . . I preferred my duty as a pastor to my feelings as a man. And what hath the faithfulness and bounty

of my God yet done? Within six months thereafter, by the preaching of the Word and the witness of the Spirit, there were added two hundred members to the church; not a few of whom were converted from the very depths of immorality and vice, to become holy and God-fearing men: and as I sat, yesterday, in my vestry, for nearly five hours, examining applicants for the liberty of sitting down with my contemned and rejected church, I thought within myself, "Ah! it was good thou stoodest here in the place where the Lord hath planted thee, and wentest not forth at the bidding of thine own troubled heart. Behold what a harvest God hath given thee in this time of shaking. Wait on thy Lord, and be of good courage; commit thy way unto Him; trust also in Him, and He will bring it to pass."'

And of a Confession.

It had also been charged against him that he was unfaithful to the Confession of Faith which he had subscribed. To this he rejoined, first, with the argument, that the Confession in question (that of the Westminster Assembly) did not preclude the belief that God had revived certain offices there supposed to be extinct; and, secondly, that no creed is a summary of all truth, or more than a protest against particular errors. 'A confession of faith, issued by any minister or body of ministers, is good as their testimony for the truth against error, and may be adopted by the Church as a landmark in the midst of the wilderness of man's opinions; but the Church may not impose it upon men as an obligation Godward.' This doctrine — enunciated, it will be remembered,

in the speaker's first published work (*ante*, p. 70)—he now courageously handles rather as a weapon of assault than of defence: and by his invincible championship contracts the gratitude of all who, coming after him into the like bitter strait, are less able to vindicate their truth and honour. 'The ecclesiastical courts in Scotland have, during the last three years,* held more false doctrine and judged more wicked judgments, on this matter, and more grieved God and Christ, and the generation of His children, than did the Council of Trent: and I would sooner far be exiled from my native land, and excommunicated from my mother Church, aye, and mured up all my life in the dungeons of the Inquisition, than seal to such doctrine, or take part in such judgments, against which I have ever lifted up, and do now again lift up, my solemn protestation, as outrageous Popery, sanctified with the name of common honesty. The reason why such treasonable doctrine findeth currency amongst the ignorant, as nothing else than common honesty, is, because they think that a confession of faith is like the charter of a corporation, and the signing of it by a minister is as an apprentice signing his indenture: they think it is like a deed of copartnery, to violate which is a distinct infraction of honesty, ratified by positive covenants. And the clergy, instead of teaching them better, know

* Thomas Erskine, Esq., of Linlathen, and the Rev. John Campbell, of Row, West Scotland, had been, the one censured, and the other deposed, for writing and preaching the "Freeness of the Gospel," or the non-limitation of salvation through the atonement of Christ. Mr. Campbell was a young man of great ability and earnestness—exerted a great influence on the country side where he ministered—and, besides, giving a name to his immediate disciples, has, with Mr. Erskine, obviously modified the popular theology of his very theological native land.

in general no better themselves, and head the hue and cry against every enlightened and sound Churchman who declareth the true doctrine as laid down above. . . . I grieve over the bondage and dishonesty of my brethren in these times: their bondage in declaring that a man's preaching should be guided by the Confession—as if he were a preacher of men's word, and not of God's word; as if the Westminster Confession were to say to the Holy Ghost in the preacher, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther!"—their hypocrisy, in that, saying thus, not one of them hath ever acted or ever doth act upon it; forasmuch as I believe that no book in the English language hath been more out of mind of preachers in the pulpit or in the closet than the Westminster Confession of Faith—whereof, till it become a convenient weapon for dashing out the brains of faithful ministers, far more than half of the clergy were ignorant despisers or hearty haters. Oh, the hypocrisy, the sevenfold hypocrisy, of this generation of Churchmen! I abhor the hypocrisy with which they perpetrate their wickedness far more than the wickedness itself. They lovers of the Westminster Confession, forsooth! A great part of them know nothing about it, and a still greater part heartily dislike it. Oh, I know Scotland too well, and have looked into the bosom of its priesthood too narrowly, to be taken with this cant about the Confession!* . . .

* Before the candid and charitable reader expresses with a sigh his disapprobation of these hard sayings, as only excusable by the orator's passion of grief and indignation, let him remember that Irving had consorted with Chalmers the best years of their common life; and let him ponder the following passage from Dr. Hanna's memoir of that great divine, vol. ii, p. 194:—'Amid this conflict of opinion, of which *he was far from an*

the mummery which they have set up in order to catch the honest-minded people of this land in their snare, and carry their verdict along with them in the persecution of the most worthy men which the Church of Scotland hath for long ages produced; yea, men in some of whom the primitive gifts of the prophet and the evangelist have been revived. My heart boileth, and fury cometh into my face, when I think of the way in which the people have been hounded on to the slaughter of the most famous men in the congregation. What is your Confession, taken at the best, but the skilful device of man's wit? With all its doctrines and its canons; with all its distinctions and its divisions—what is it but the device of man? And when ye set it in the pulpit and in the place of judgment, in the house of God and in the meeting of elders, what is it but

unmoved spectator, Dr. Chalmers *preserved unbroken silence.* From the daring speculations of Mr. Irving, he sensitively shrank back; but his strong convictions as to the unconditional freeness of the gospel offer, and his substantial agreement with many of the leading doctrines of those generally denominated "marrow-men," disposed him to judge mildly of the errors of Mr. Erskine and Mr. Campbell. It was during this winter (1829-30), that an intelligent friend, residing generally in the country, called upon him in Edinburgh. . . . "We had some conversation," says this friend, in describing the interview, "about the heresy. Dr. Chalmers said, over and over again, that he thought Mr. Erskine's "Freeness" one of the most delightful books that ever had been written. It seems to me that the Gospel had never appeared to him in any very different light from that in which Mr. Erskine represents it. He regrets that there is any controversy, for he thinks there is little difference. That every one is already pardoned, he thinks clearly contrary to Scripture; and he objects to Mr. Erskine seeming to think that those who have not received this truth have not received the Gospel. 'I don't like,' he said, 'narrowing the broad basis of the Gospel to the pin-point speculations of an individual brain. One thing (he added, and his countenance assumed a look of deep feeling) I fear—I do fear—that the train of his thoughts might lead Mr. Erskine to doubt the eternity of future punishments. Now that would be going sadly against Scripture.'"' I am tempted to add what follows, for its unconscious satire of the man I too much revere to blame. It was in the University Museum this conversation took place. '"He placed himself opposite a lion. 'I never look on that spectacle,' he said, 'without feeling reflected from it the expression of a positive virtue—*the noble independence, the dignified generosity, the dauntless courage.*'"'

your idol, the image of jealousy, your drag and net, to which you sacrifice your sons and daughters, yea, the rulers and chief men of the congregation? I believe by the way in which you and they have set up that book of about two hundred year's standing, in the place of and above God's Word, ye have done an act which, if not repented of, will seal you up in darkness and in deadness, in apostacy and the worship of Anti-christ. And being myself the head of a congregation, and a standard-bearer in the Church, I do solemnly denounce you as in arms against the King, and lead forth my squadron from the midst of you; to do battle no longer by your side, but against you, until you do change your ensign and fight under the banner of the Word of God.'

Inalienable sonship to the mother church

My Church—says one, I think it is Jean Paul Richter—is my mother; and you cannot dissuade me from loving her by the proof of her faults. Irving, as we might expect, was not the less fond and proud a son even when he had thus denounced and repudiated the children of his mother. As soon as he had taken breath, he began again—'Do I therefore secede or separate myself and my church from the Church of Scotland? Verily no! but from a degenerate race of her rulers, who are unworthy of the name, and have sold themselves to do iniquity with greediness, and to draw sin as with a cart-rope. The Church of Christ within the realm of Scotland, is now of at least 1600 years' standing, and subsisted in great glory before the stream of the Reformation, in time when her children went forth and

planted the Gospel in the dark regions of the world, amidst the fierce and unconquered nations who overwhelmed the Roman empire; when her ministers went forth into the court of Christian emperors and warned them against the Bishop of Rome, and watched and exposed him, and denounced him the enemy of Christ in all the nations of Christendom. I am a minister of that Church which received into its bosom the persecuted Britons fleeing from the murderous decrees of Dioclesian, which received the Culdees from Ireland, and maintained her independence of Rome for centuries after the other Churches had sold themselves into bondage. Nor do I disparage the work of Knox and the Reformers when I set it down as but the brazen age of the Church, now degenerated into the age of iron. And this age of iron was, I think, introduced by that same Westminster Confession which received royal authority at the Revolution.* Knox, and the men of his time, raised up a noble protestation against the Papacy, and ordered the Church according to righteousness in her discipline, and in her doctrine coming behind none of the Reformed Churches. But the Reformers were too intent upon the mere negation of Popery, upon the emancipation of the civil estates of kings and peoples, and upon leagues and covenants constructed for the preservation of what they had made good.

* No longer ago than the preceding year, he had republished 'The Confessions of Faith and the Books of Discipline of the Church of Scotland, of date anterior to the Westminster Confession;' prefixing an historical sketch which makes the reader regret Irving had not bestowed upon the past a little of the time so painfully bestowed upon the future—and a commentatory preface which shows how hearty was his satisfaction with the creeds he was accused of insincerely professing.

They lacked discernment in the truth of God; they digged not deep enough in the Holy Scriptures; they saw not the glorious privileges of the Church—her spiritual gifts and supernatural endowments, the coming and kingdom of the Lord, and the blessed offices of the ever-present Comforter. I am in nowise fettered by their shortcomings, and I have no homage to offer at their shrines; but in my liberty of Christ's freeman, in my prerogative of Christ's minister, I am intent upon the knowledge and faith of all the truth written in His holy Word; and do perceive a work arising into view which will far surpass the work of Reformation, and bring back the best days of the Church. I make no doubt that the Lord is hearing the prayers and rewarding the labours of his servants, and bringing to pass all the promises of the glory of the latter day. Ye are this day either to set yourselves for or against this blessed work; either to stand with it and prosper, or stand against it and be overwhelmed. Small are its beginnings, but faith apprehendeth its great and glorious ending. The cloud like a man's hand hath appeared; and the heavens shall soon be black with clouds, the earth moistened with rain, and all her fields clothed with plenty!' And so, with glances of tearful pride at the remote past, and of radiant hope at the proximate future, he went out into a dark and desolate present.

Judgment against the defender.

After a short adjournment, the Court met again, and its members proceeded to deliver their judgment one by one. Unanimously, they decided for the complainers—that the Rev. Edward Irving had 'rendered himself unfit to remain the minister' of the Caledonian

Church, Regent Square, 'and ought to be removed therefrom in pursuance of the conditions of the trust-deed of the said church.'

Indictment for heresy.

It was nearly twelve months from this time, when Edward Irving set out from London to answer in person a citation from the Presbytery of his native town—the Presbytery from which he had received ordination—on a charge of heresy. The 'heresy' was, of course, that 'doctrine of our Lord's human nature,' which had already been condemned by the Presbytery of London; and for participation in which three of his reverend brethren had already been visited with censure, or worse. The last of these three was Mr. David Dow, who was also a believer in the 'supernaturalism' of the unknown tongues, and a subject of their manifestation. It was by the direction of the General Assembly that the Presbytery of Annan had taken up this charge against their distinguished missionary to heathen London.* They had written to the publishers and printers of the works referred to them; and those persons having 'no doubt that the Rev. Edward Irving was the author,' they had written also to him; and had received in reply 'certain letters in which were heretical sentiments, and most calumnious attacks upon the General Assembly.' The Presbytery had at length appointed Wednesday, the 15th of March, 1833, for the hearing of the case, and had summoned the accused to appear.

* Dr. Andrew Thomson, in one of his speeches in the Assembly, spoke of Mr. Irving as having chosen to labour in 'one of the darkest places of the earth!'

Trial of the charge at Annan.

It was on the morning of that day that Mr. Irving arrived, by the London mail, in the town described in the opening pages of this volume. He alighted at the house of his brother-in-law, Mr. Dickson; and was met there by Mr. Kerr, an elder of his congregation, who had preceded him thither, Mr. David Dow, and some other friends. In the High Street, near the inn where the coach would stop, were groups of people waiting its arrival; and when they saw where it halted, they ran to greet that illustrious fellow-townsman whose visits to his father's house had always 'made the place like a fair'—all the country side coming in to see and hear the famous preacher who had grown up amongst them a notable lad, and carried away in his face the prophecy of greatness. But never had the tanner's son drawn thither such a concourse as to-day. Even from over the border, from Carlisle, as well as from Gretna and Dumfries, and Longtown, and all the villages in the valley between Criffel and Auldgirth, came in companies of people—many more than could crowd into the parish church, whither, at twelve o'clock, Mr. Irving and his friends took their way.

The defence.

The formal part of the proceedings was abridged by the defender's admission that he was the author of the books and letters put in; but when it was demanded whether he would admit 'the relevancy of the libel,' he asked, 'What is that?' 'The question is this,' said the Moderator: 'did you teach the fallen state and sinfulness of Christ's nature?' To this he replied, with great solemnity of manner,

'If I have said so, and that God made it not sinless, then is the libel true, and then do I deserve all the pains of hell for having taught such a doctrine; but if I have said and taught Christ was fashioned as a man, that he took our sinful nature upon him, but that, by the grace of God, he was upheld, and yielded not to the motions of that sinful nature, then is it a glorious doctrine, and I will maintain it, yea, even unto death. And now, I pray you, judge truly between me and these doctrines.' Invited to acknowledge the accuracy of the quotations in the libel, from his writings, he steadily refused: 'he would not ensnare himself in the words of another man's mouth.' When, after some addition had been made to the libel, he was asked whether it was not now relevant, he replied: 'That is your matter, not mine: I answer not a word;' at which there was such a burst of sympathy that the Moderator threatened to retire with his court into a private room. While the members of the Presbytery were giving their opinions on the question, the defender sat with his face in his hands, and often sighed deeply. After a short adjournment and a private conference, Mr. Irving insisting that he should make his defence before the people, he was recalled to the bar. The speech of two hours' length which he then made, was chiefly occupied with exposition and defence of the doctrine for which he was then called in question. With a voice tremulous with emotion, so hard to suppress in this of all places, he denied in the solemnest form of words—'as God liveth'—that he had preached the doctrine attributed to him; but declared that for the doctrine he *had*

preached, he would even die. 'I stand in this place and say, that I am ready to die for it.' His judges grew alarmed for their influence with their own flocks. Dr. Duncan rose and said, it was evident that Mr. Irving was speaking to the people of his doctrine, not to the Presbytery in his defence. The Moderator said, it seemed to him as if Mr. Irving imagined he was in London, preaching to his people there. 'Thou fool!' might Irving have replied: 'do I not see the eaves of my father's house through these church windows; do I not feel the breath of spring stirring the very trees under which I sported or slept in happy boyhood, long before I knew of London and its wearinesses. Is it such as thou that are licensed to deal with human hearts, and to sit in judgment upon me?' But he had no contempt or anger left, except the poet's 'scorn of scorn, and hate of hate.' With a touching meekness he answered to this rude disturber: 'Oh, no! no!—it is not so. I know well where I now stand—I stand in the place where I was born, in the church where I was first baptized and then ordained. In my zeal for the truth, I may have been unable to separate the people from the Presbytery, but I will endeavour not so to err again.' Of the book which the General Assembly has condemned, he says that, after that event, 'I repaired to my session-house, that I might be free from interruption; and there, day after day, I perused this book, to see if error, indeed, lay within its pages. And after having well conned and considered of the matter in this retirement, and finding that I had nothing to alter, I fell down on my knees and returned fervent thanks

unto my Lord, that he had enabled me so to think and so to write. No man knoweth this, but the Lord knoweth it. It contains doctrines that may be unpalatable: I have tried to make them palatable. But whether they be so or no, they are medicines good and wholesome for the Church—strong medicines for a dying Church. Ay! they are medicines which, if yet taken, will heal her, and make her live—and they are doing it.' He seems to connect the doctrine of this book with that of the deposed John Campbell—whom he pronounces, in the fervour of his sympathy, 'the greatest gift ever bestowed on the people of Scotland since the days of Knox—yea, a greater than he.' That which was denounced as 'heresy,' had evidently become to him a comprehensive as well as a truthful doctrine—a truth to heal the wounds and vitalize the dead members of the Church. In this spirit he exclaims, 'It were better, this day, that ye were to start north, south, east, and west—yea, to every point of the compass—to preach the truth in every town, and in every city, and in every village, than to sit here debating on points of doctrine. Mock me not by speaking to me of popularity! The reproaches of a brother are hard to bear. Ye know not what I have suffered—ye know not what it is to be severed from a flock you love, to be banished from your house, to be driven from a place of worship in which ye have been honoured as God's servants by the tokens of His approbation. Yet, though thus scorned and trampled on, truth is prevailing. You shall not go one half mile in London but you shall see some of our Scottish youth—yea, and of our English

youth also—standing up to preach the truth for which I now appear at this bar. At Charing Cross, at London Bridge, at the Tower, and in all the high places of the city, you shall find them preaching to a perishing people, and, though often hooted and pelted, yet patient withal. And I am sure the day is not far distant when the evangelist shall go forth and be listened to throughout the land.' With a protest of his liberty, a warning, and an entreaty to repent, he concludes: 'Ministers and Elders of the Presbytery of Annan! I stand at your bar by no constraint of man. You could not—no person on earth could—have brought me hither. I am a free man on a free soil, and living beyond your bounds; neither General Assembly nor Pope has a right to meddle with me. Yea, I know ye have sinned against the Head of the Church in stretching thus beyond your measure; and this sin ye must repent of. Ye have sinned against the Lord in my person; ye have done what ye had better been quit of; and, if you repent not, your consciences will tell you hereafter that you have been guilty in this matter. Is it nothing, think you, that ye have brought me from my flock of nine hundred souls, besides children, looking up to me for spiritual food? Is it nothing that ye have taken me away from ruling among my apostles and elders, and brought me three hundred miles, to stand before you at this bar? I speak not this for the injury done to myself, but to the Lord in me. Ye offend Him, for in the least of His little ones He may be offended. But I forgive it, and will pray for you. I stand here not by constraint, but willingly. Do what you like. I

ask not judgment of you; my judgment is with my God, and as to the General Assembly, the spirit of judgment is departed from it. Oh! ye know not how near ye are to the brink of destruction. Ye need not expedite your fall. All are dead around. The Church is struggling with many enemies, but her worst is within herself—I mean that wicked Assembly. Behold, the Lord cometh quickly! His voice is lifted up, and is speaking in divers parts of the land, Prepare ye the way! Mourn, mourn for your guilt in your homes. Restore the household worship of God, which your fathers set up amongst us. Be ye filled with the love of God. Put away from you your drunkenness, your politics, your quarrels, and questions, and seek the Lord, while he may be found, and he will have mercy upon you, and abundantly pardon.

Sentence of deposition.

When the members of the Presbytery had one by one declared him worthy of deposition from the ministry, he was asked whether he could show any objection why sentence to that effect should not be pronounced. He rose and said, with great vehemence—for the speeches to which he had listened in silence had galled his spirit: some of them by their bitterness, some by their feeble friendliness—'Objection? All objection! Objection? All objection! I object not for my own sake, but for the sake of Christ my Lord, whom I serve and honour. I object for your sakes, who will thus call down on your heads the righteous wrath of God. I object for the Church's sake, who are led blindfold to ruin.' The rejoinder thus introduced was chiefly addressed to the

use made of extracts from his writings. Just as the senior member of the Presbytery, at the request of the Moderator, and preliminary to the sentence, was about to offer prayer—there was heard 'an utterance in power.' The voice, so far as intelligible, was to the effect—'Arise, depart! flee ye out of her! Ye cannot pray—ye cannot pray to Christ whom ye deny! Depart! depart!' A strange and solemn scene was that—but not without that dash of the ludicrous which is usually an element in such scenes. It was now nearly seven o'clock in the afternoon of that March day, and dusk filled the still crowded church. There was but one lighted candle in the place. This candle one of the Presbytery lifted, and looked with it searchingly about into the gloom and commotion, to discover whence came the intruding voice—not an inapt emblem of the clerical mind, peering by the feeble light of the understanding into the heart-mysteries of religion. It was Mr. Dow—who had sat all day at Mr. Irving's right hand—from whom the voice came. When it had ceased, it was moved that the speaker be removed for a breach of order. But again was the wisdom of the Synod unequal to the occasion—for already Mr. Dow was making his way out of the church; Mr. Irving closely following, and exclaiming to the obstructive crowd, as he stretched out his long arms, 'Stand forth! stand forth! as many as will obey the Holy Ghost, let them depart!' In the midst of confusion, the interrupted prayer was offered. Then, Mr. Irving not appearing at the bar, an officer of the court was ordered to call his name at the door—which he did, three times;

and returned to say there was no answer made. In his absence, therefore, was pronounced the sentence of deposition which formally and finally cut him off from the ministry of the Scottish Church.

Farewell services in Annandale.

As the crowd dispersed, it was announced to them from the window of his sister's house, by his friends, Smith and Kerr, that Mr. Irving would preach the next day in a field hard by. He did so, at eleven o'clock, from beneath a tent, and the congregation was estimated at nearly two thousand people. His discourse was an exposition and application of the ninth chapter of the prophecies of Zechariah. In the course of the service, he read a letter to 'the Church of Christ under my pastoral care, and to the saints in London, with the elders and deacons.' The letter recounted all that had taken place the previous day, and dwelt with satisfaction on the message 'by the mouth of dear David Dow,' as a 'deliverance from the Synod and Assembly,' so that there would be 'no call again in this matter to visit this land.' Nevertheless, he expressed his intention to 'tarry in these parts certain days, and to publish in the towns of the coast the great name of the Lord.'—This purpose he fully carried out. On the next day, Friday, he preached at Cromarty—on Saturday, and four times on Sunday, at Dumfries, and neighbouring villages; on each occasion to immense audiences, and generally at great length. Excluded from the pulpits, that not long ago had been pressed on his acceptance, he betook him to the market-place and the wayside. Cast out by ecclesiastics from their consecrated brotherhood, he

appealed to the Christian commonalty for countenance and audience. So hearty was their response, that he made memorable the places where he stood. In all those places, after the lapse of twenty years, he is reverently and affectionately remembered—his predictions are recalled—his denunciations are repeated—above all, his loving words are cherished. At this day, the ploughman will stop in the furrow, within sight, perhaps, of a covenanter's grave or the poet's home, to tell the sojourner how he heard 'Doctor Irving' preach from a cart—how he shook his little Bible at the Kirk—and how there has been no man like him for preaching the gospel to the poor.

CHAPTER XI.

BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD.

In the interval between the events of which the last chapter is the history, Mr. Irving and his flock occupied, first, as their ecclesiastical home, a building in the Gray's Inn Road, that had been used as a bazaar. Of his last public words in the church with which he had so many and such multiform associations—the church which had risen, as it were, out of the blaze of his celebrity and influence; the church in which he had received, as from the hand of its God, the gifts most precious to human hearts, and had returned them in weeping submission to the hand that gave; the church in which had been lifted up, first and almost solitary, the voice that had been dumb for nearly eighteen centuries—of his last words in this thrice endeared edifice, there unfortunately exists no discoverable record.

Last words in the National Scotch Church.

Nor are we better off as to his ministrations in the temporary church to which, with nearly all his elders and people, he had repaired. Paternoster-row had yet enough of trading or other interest in Edward Irving, sometimes to bid

Temporary church in Gray's-Inn-Rd.

the short-hand writers wait upon him; but what they printed seems to have floated altogether out of sight—perhaps caught up and hidden away, by faithful worshippers, as relics; certainly not discoverable in public libraries, or on those repositories of 'unconsidered trifles,' the book-stalls. It seems that his Sunday discourses took usually the expository form—dwelling on the Psalms and prophets, and purposely divested of rhetorical adornment; that not unfrequently he preached in the open air—not always without interruption—as did, also, a numerous band of evangelists—speaking chiefly of national sin and judgment, the deadness of the Church and the speedy coming of its Lord; that there were daily meetings for prayer, in which he was more wonderfully fervent than ever; and that there was 'an unbounded stream of supernatural utterance.' This last became, of course, the governing element of the new communion. Released from old restraints, the preacher and his hearers were also deprived of their old organization. They retained, as a community, the form to which they had been moulded—the Presbyterian order of worship and constitution of membership. But many members of other communions, Episcopalian and Independent, now sought to associate with them; and the influence of these opposing elements became apparent. One of the most remarkable characteristics of the supernatural utterances, at this time, was, that they anticipated the promulgation of some of the doctrines now known as Tractarian. They insisted upon the paramount necessity of Christian unity, and the essential value of sacraments. For the latter, Mr. Irving's

teaching had prepared his followers.* Nevertheless, so strong had been the tendency among them to disregard every thing but the new spiritualism, that a resolute stand had to be made for the perpetuity of water baptism. On one occasion—we read in the 'Narrative' of a gentleman, whose accuracy of statement is unquestioned, while his inferences are very reasonably denied—'in the midst of the service, as is usual in the Scotch Church, an infant was brought to be baptized. I found a power resting upon me during the preparatory stages of the ceremony; and when Mr. Irving took the babe in his arms, and was proceeding to pour water on it, with the usual form of baptism, an utterance broke from me, "Jesus receiveth thee into his Church, thou little one, and baptizeth thee with his Spirit." I was not at all conscious what I was going to say, until the words broke from me; nor was I at all conscious at what interval the power which rested on me would move to utterance. When the utterance was given, it was accompanied with the conviction, that this was the form of baptism of infants in the spiritual Church; and I felt much grieved when Mr. Irving proceeded with the ordinary form, and merely returned thanks to God for the utterance, as God's honouring his own ordinance. On another occasion, on a subsequent day, when, in the midst of his congregation, two children were brought to be baptized, the same utterance, at the

* In his Preface to 'the Confessions,' (see *ante*, p. 241 note) he speaks of having been delivered by this doctrine 'from the infidelity of evangelicalism, which denies any gift of God either in the work of Christ, or in the sacraments, or anywhere, until we experience it to be within ourselves; making God a mere promiser, until we become receivers; making his bounty and beneficence nought but words, till we make it reality by accepting thereof;

same interval, was given to me, and Mr. Irving persisted in the visible form, and returned thanks as before. Judging from the light which has since been given me, I see evidently Mr. Irving was not prepared to abandon the outward form at this time, and, therefore, I was restrained from mentioning to him my grief at his persisting in it. I was, also, myself shortly after shown, as by revelation of the power, that until he received the endowment of a spiritual minister, he could not dispense with the form.' In other words—until a new ecclesiastical economy, under a revived Apostolate, should be set up.

For this event, promised by the mouth of prophets, the faithful had anxiously waited and prayed. Sometime in 1832, 'at a meeting for prayer, held in a private house, one of those present was declared in the word of prophecy to be an Apostle, and exhorted to the exercise of his office, in conveying the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands.' It was not till the eve of Christmas, in the same year, that the Apostle exercised any apostolic function. Two months before, the church had removed from the bazaar, to larger rooms in Newman-street, Oxford-street, known as West's Picture Gallery. The furniture of the building seemed to anticipate a new ritual and polity. It contained neither altar nor pulpit—but at the upper end was a lofty semicircular platform, reached by a

Removal to Newman Street.

in one word, making religion only subjective in the believer, and not elective in God—objective in Christ, in order that it may be subjective in the believer; a religion of moods, and not of purposes and facts—having its reality in the creature, its proposal of reality only in God. The true doctrine of the sacraments,' he adds, 'will always strike this infidelity on the head. *It revolutionized my mind;* and that not till after I had been the

flight of steps. Round the hind part of this stage seats were fixed, and in front, looking to the audience, a chair and reading-desk for the pastor—or 'angel,' as he was now commonly termed. On the night above-mentioned, 'through the supernatural action of the Apostle alone'—according to an authorised 'Chronicle of certain events'—'one previously called to be an Evangelist was ordained; and on the following day, Christmas Day, through the concurrent action of the Apostle and the Prophet, the one calling for the ordination, the other effecting it, but both in manifest supernatural power, an Angel was ordained over the church at Albury.'

Setting up of the Apostleship.

Three months later, as we have seen, Mr. Irving was deprived of his ministry in the Church of Scotland. Immediately there came a voice, or a concurrence of voices, declaring that he must not administer the sacraments, nor fulfil any priestly function, but confine himself to the work of a preacher or deacon. This he did—and, after the lapse of a week or two, on the 5th of April, 1833, he was 'called and ordained' Angel, or chief pastor, of the church assembling in Newman Street, as had been the Angel of the church at Albury.

Mr. Irving's re-ordination.

Than this circumstance—scarcely known, I believe,

object of attraction to a nation; showing me how vain are natural gifts to discern spiritual realities. I can never express the obligation which I and hundreds, both of ministers and members of the Church of Christ, whom it hath pleased God through me to benefit, owe to the straightforward, uncompromising, thorough-going boldness of that twenty-first Article of our Confession, which both parties in the Church, moderate and evangelical, as heartily repudiate as ever they did repudiate that holy man of God, John Campbell, from the ministry, for maintaining the substance of the same truth; namely, the veritable gift which Christ is to the reprobate as much as to the elect. *Hinc illæ lachrimæ.* My mother! oh my mother!'

beyond the boundaries of the people immediately interested; for it seems to be generally supposed that Irving appointed the Apostles, not that he was appointed by them—than this circumstance, what surer proof can be given of Irving's profoundly sincere belief in the really divine character of these 'utterances'? It is held to be proof of a man's sincerity that he will take God to witness what he saith—that he will suffer opprobrium and money loss, or other form of hardship, rather than unsay or keep silence. Irving had done all this. Still there were some who saw in his obstinacy but the swellings of his pride—'the pride of intellect,' as bigots usually name the inability of a man of honest understanding to call darkness light. But even unreasoning bigotry must have been staggered on its easy way by the spectacle of this man of haughty intellect and flattered vanity, kneeling in the presence of the people he had created, to men suddenly from the obscure become notorious—and if not Heaven-inspired, then silly fanatics or sillier knaves. Naaman's resort to Jordan instead of to Abana or Pharpar, could not have been harder than this acceptance from the hands of plain and lowly men of title to 'the work of an angel,' by him who for ten years had kept the ear of princes and people as an 'orator for God,' and the duly-ordained minister of a venerated mother-Church. Deeply-seated in that big heart must have been the belief which could bow so lofty a head to a depth of submission derisive to the world!

Its significance.

And this it is that I have ventured to call 'Baptism

for the Dead.' For the Newman Street ordination of Edward Irving, whatever its significance to that church, was to him an anointing for his burial, though nearly two more years of life remained to him. His public work was over. He was no more seen in the 'open places about the city'— he no more claimed from press or pulpit the ear of the nation to whom he had been a voice that upbraided after it had ceased to charm. He even removed his residence from the house in Judd Place, New Road, where many who may read these pages remember to have enjoyed bounteous hospitality, and listened to remarkable colloquies—removed thence his family and books to the house of which the church was an appendage; and seldom showed his well-known figure in the streets or parks. It was in truth 'a well-known figure'—yet rapidly changing, to the sorrow of all observers. His flesh became wan and flaccid—his raven hair, 'hoary as with extreme age.' His eye gleamed with an unquiet light, and the hectic spot on his pale cheek betrayed the fire burning at his heart. It appears from letters we must hereafter quote, that he deemed this illness the punishment of some sin, or the correction of some error, into which he and his people had fallen; and which I understand to have been an attempt, on their part, to anticipate the perfect organization of the Apostolic Church. There were to be constituted seven local churches, before the organization of any one of the number could be completed; and as yet there were but three or four—the third having been constituted from a congregation of Independents,

Seclusion and sickness.

meeting in Artillery Street, Bishopsgate, under the Rev. J. L. Miller, who, after some time preaching the doctrines held at Newman Street, and encouraging the 'gift of utterance,' was on the 13th of May, 1833, ordained an Angel. The Apostles interposed their authority for the prevention of this disorderly progression; and again, though not at once, Irving submitted. There was rising up a church at Edinburgh—and to these people he, in the capacity of a prophet, with one or two others, were deputed. He went on this mission in the early spring of 1834. He arrived safely in Edinburgh, and did his appointed work there with characteristic decision and success. He returned, and spent the summer in London, suffering, secluded, and changing, as we have intimated. The voice of prophecy was again heard respecting him. Though rejected from the Apostleship by reason of the sins of his mother-Church, he was yet to be a prophet unto her, and was to go again into his native land. He was ready to obey: doubtless, the mention of return to Scotland had a secret attraction to the dying man—though it does not seem that he thought of going there either to die or to recover, but simply to do the work appointed him.

A last journey.

He set out in September, alone. He went by coach to Shrewsbury, and there bought a horse, on which he rode through Herefordshire and into Wales, much enjoying the exercise and scenery. But by the time he reached Liverpool, he found himself so ill, that he wrote for his wife to join him there. They went on to Greenock, by steam-boat; and thence, after some stay, to Glasgow—where they rested in the house

of one who was not an old friend, but who loved and honoured him. He designed to go thence to Edinburgh, feeling, as he wrote home, 'sensibly revived with a little strength,' and being 'able to resume the exercise which is recommended, viz., riding on horseback,' and to 'conduct the worship of the family who have received us under their roof with joy.' But brief and delusive was this revival. Ten or twelve days later—November the 5th—he wrote again, 'The hand of the Lord is still upon me as heretofore.' From the beginning of December, he rose no more from his bed. A pulse that would not be abated from the height of a hundred per minute, and was sometimes a hundred and forty—hours of quiet suffering, succeeded by other hours of speechless lethargy—indicated the fatal extent of disease and exhaustion in a frame that had seemed built for utmost longevity. His wife (the three children that remained to them, had not accompanied her) was now joined by his mother (who had already mourned the death of two sons)—his sister, Mrs. Dickson—and his father-in-law, the Rev. Mr. Martin. He was sensible of their presence, almost to the last hour—on the day before he died, a Sunday, desiring his wife to read to him Psalms and Epistles. Among the last sounds heard from his lips, were verses of the twenty-third Psalm—'The Lord is my shepherd'—murmured, as if to himself, in the Hebrew tongue. Again, he was heard to say—'If I die, I die to the Lord: living and dying, I am the Lord's.' And so, after six hours of unconsciousness

Death—

—on Monday, December the 8th—he was found to have passed away.

He lies where he fell. They buried him in the tomb of a friend, in Glasgow cathedral crypt, on the Friday following his death.* He was borne to the grave by not only a large company of friends, and of the common people, but even by the clergy of the Church that had cast him out of its communion. In the north aisle of the crypt of that cathedral whose simple massive beauty might symbolize the Scottish character, and whose history is coeval with the Scottish Church and nation—hard by the reputed shrine of St. Mungo, the Augustine of Caledonia, and the mutilated remains of altars at which Cardinal Beaton may have ministered, and which the foot of Knox may have spurned—beneath a roof on which were written Ave Marie's by the Catholic, and over them Scripture texts by the Episcopalian, and which has echoed with the harsh music of Presbyterian psalmody—in the north aisle of this crypt, the noblest, perhaps, extant, is a plain black slab, which marks the resting place of him whose restless activities we have reviewed. What was spoken, as they laid him there, we know not—but what better could have been said, than was said at the grave of the great Reformer whose effigy overlooks cathedral and city, 'Here lies a man who never feared the face of man'?—and what better could be written on the vacant slab than those words in which the biographer of heroes records his

And burial.

* The City Council expressed a desire that his grave and monument should be in the Necropolis, the city cemetery; but the vault in the crypt had been accepted.

knowledge and his love?—'His was the freest, brotherliest, bravest, human soul mine ever came in contact with: I call him, on the whole, the best man I have ever (after trial enough) found in this world, or ever hope to find.' But though without monument or epitaph, those vast dark caverns are not to Edward Irving 'waste regions of oblivion,' as they are called by one whose genius has touched with added glory all Scottish scenes and places.* Though 'the dusky banners and tattered escutcheons that indicate the graves of those who were once, doubtless, princes in Israel,' wave not over his grave,—it is neither obscure nor unsought. It is pointed out to visitors—and sometimes it is asked for by one whose fixed gaze, escaping sigh, or furtive prayer, reveal that to him it exceeds in interest far older shrines. And, perchance, among the tens of thousands making up the busy Present ever rolling without that pale, calm prison-house of the Past, some few daily cast within a grateful thought of him who sleeps there;—sleeps, not in his sweet birth-place, nor in his mighty home, but in the city of his first works and his last—the city that echoed with the first notes of his fame, and received the wreck of his strength;—sleeps to the world and time, but, if his own perception of the unseen be correct, is awake to memory and hope.

* Sir Walter Scott, in 'Rob Roy.'

CHAPTER XII.

POSTHUMOUS POWER.

Wide sea, that one continuous murmur breeds
Along the pebbled shore of memory!
Many old rotten-timbered boats there be
Upon thy vaporous bosom, magnified
To goodly vessels: many a sail of pride,
And golden-keel'd, is left unlaunched and dry.

Endymion, Book II.

ONE of these latter—'a sail of pride, and golden keel'd'—every reader will now admit, was Edward Irving. And history is chargeable on his behalf with the injustice deprecated by the poet. His fame was fairly committed to the eldest muse. None of his contemporaries, we have seen, spread a broader sheet to the wind of public opinion than he; few made a wider or brighter track upon the mind and heart of his generation. He was not a phantom fireship or gala-boat. The genuineness of his genius and the unfeignedness of his virtue, were denied by scarcely the most cynical of his critics, or the bitterest of his detractors. His epitaph was written by the power-

The necessity of this Biography.

fullest of these 'Latter-Day' pens.* Yet, hitherto, no worthy memento of him has existed. He was to the last, and is to this new decade, only a tradition—an inscrutable, uncared-for tradition. His wondrous eloquence is voiceless, his prophetic energy apparently inoperative. His name is associated, in the popular memory, with 'unknown tongues,' unfulfilled predictions, and unintelligible polemics. He is never mentioned in the pulpits, but to point a shallow moral—as a warning example how perilous is intellect to a Christian preacher, how fatal popularity to spiritual life. Authorship has honoured him with only ephemeral memoirs, obituaries, articles in Biographical Dictionaries, and casual allusions. Even by the Church of which he is the reputed founder, he appears to me to be inadequately appreciated. It was time, then, I felt, that at least an attempt were made to reclaim the memory of Edward Irving from the neglect of the literati and the custody of a sect—to challenge for it the universal admiration and love due to the affluently gifted and the eminently good. The attempt has now been made. There has been presented little that is absolutely new—but, I trust, enough to revive, correct, and transmit impressions that should not be allowed to die, as they were in danger of doing; and to pay a tribute of reverent, though quite unsectarian admiration, to a man only whose name seemed to live, even whilst his influence grew daily wider.

For, although the communion in which Edward Irving died—to which he bequeathed his heart

* See 'Fraser's Magazine,' for January, 1835; and Carlyle's Miscellanies, vol. v.

treasures, and which they still adorn—justly refuses to be called by his name, gives to his writings no such place as is occupied in other communions by the writings of Calvin or Wesley, and is greatly dissimilar in aspect from the communion to which he belonged forty of the forty-two years he lived—I hold that it is the logical outcome of all his intellectual tendencies, the realization of his restless strivings, the embodiment of his deepest characteristics, as truly his work as any one of the books he wrote, the only faithful mirror of his soul, and, rightly understood, the best vindication of his memory. And this is said, be it observed, by one who is not a member of that communion—who looks on it from without, and from the elevation of freedom from all Church bonds. From this stand-point, I see in that branch of the Catholic Apostolic Church whose most conspicuous place of assembly is in Gordon Square, the union of attributes that is described by an admirable and influential writer as the great religious desideratum of the age—a simple creed, a gorgeous ritual, and a devoted priesthood. It has no Decrees of Councils, no Thirty-nine Articles, no Westminster Confession, no Declaration of Faith; by one of which four devices, every other Church narrows its borders, fetters thought, and tempts to hypocrisy: it is content with those antique statements of Christian fact and doctrine which are anterior to either of the great schisms, and whose antiquity, while endearing them to the heart, invites the free action of the intellect. It neither affirms nor denies the propositions which distract the polemical,

'Irvingism.'

are derided by the literary, and either inflame or infidelize the populace. Providing by the essentials of its constitution, for the utterance of divine messages, by whomsoever sent, it needs not to worship the letter of Scripture, nor to perplex itself with definitions of inspiration. Recognising as Christian brethren all the baptized, it gives a practical solution to the problem of sacramental efficacy; yet, not confounding the numbers of the elect with the numbers of the saved, limits redeeming grace neither by the font nor by the grave. Its unity being a unity of spirit, not of subscription, it may enjoy within a diversity of opinion the counterpart of its charity towards those who are without. Its worship strikes the imagination of the educated beholder as the very worship celebrated by Tertullian or by Hippolytus. That venerable presbyter, those ardent young evangelists, these black-vested deacons —that ancient anthem, and still more ancient incense burning—the homily, the hymn, the utterance, and the eucharist—transport us in sacred fancy to an antiquity beyond the reach of Romish or other rites. And yet, how fitting is it all to the wants of to-day! That unique confession of the sin of schism, that prayerful remembrance of the dead, that earnest recognition of a PRESENT CHRIST, that all-pervading devotion without doctrine—does it not give shape and language to the aspirations of the soul alienated from all Churches, yet quite unable to do without them? It may well be so —for this ritual is the product of many minds; trained in diverse schools; united in their belief of a divine mission; and searching, under the impression of a

divine command, up and down Christendom, for the scattered vessels of the sanctuary, to find and to rebuild. And the priesthood? Consisting of men of various sects and vocations, not all of them separated from those vocations—it may not exceed the priesthood of other Churches in devotion to prescribed duty; but its functions certainly appear at once more comprehensive and precise—every man having a special work, and the entire work including ministration to every want or circumstance of humanity: the daily service of the altar and the pulpit, the visitation of the sick, the relief of the distressed, the absolution of the burdened. On the whole, standing, as I have said, without, and looking through none of the coloured windows of association, I see in this Catholic Apostolic Church—which seems to answer, in the costly, enduring beauty of its principal edifice, the vulgar notion of its hope; and in the large proportion of its thirty thousand that are men of liberal education and social status, to answer the vulgar notion of its faith—which is already twenty years old, and has steadily increased since its first sifting—which has adherents among the priests of Italy and the scholars of Germany, in France, in Switzerland, and in America—which has given refuge to fugitives from all beliefs and from no-belief, and is attracting the eyes of many more such rudderless mariners—which never shocks the heart, though it may sometimes try the understanding—I see in it, so remarkably successful an attempt to harmonize the conflicting tendencies of the age, or rather, the conflicting tendencies of the religious nature; uniting art with devotion, faith with

intellect, and liberty with law; that it may well claim divine origin and guidance.

In this, the observer may be mistaken—but, certainly, if this Church be as I have described it, its relation to Edward Irving is that stated above. For no one can have perused the foregoing pages without discovering—even had the writer not pointed attention thereto—the abiding presence of mental conditions out of which such a Church would arise. He was impatient of creeds, and yet would not altogether dispense with them. His intellect was at once too strong to permit a form of words to fetter it, and too justly distrustful of its strength to refuse such guidance. He would say 'I believe,' but would not therefore cease to think. The formula which he subscribed was as the green sod from which the lark takes its joyful, viewless flight—not as the hole of a rotten tree or ivied wall, from which the owl hoots its terror at the light. He rested his faith and devotion upon facts that may be expressed in words, but could no more limit them thereto than he could keep his eyes upon the ground that sustained his feet. His was a religion of the heart—and such a religion has 'evidences' as well as beliefs, of which creeds can make no mention. It is its own authority and its own interpreter: it will assert reasons not set down in books, and discern meanings that escape the torturings of commentators. Hence it was that Irving was perpetually at war with a generation that was nothing if not logical—out of joint with Churches that had been shaken out of the sleep of formalism

Irving's mental and religious characteristics.

only to be put into the fetters of literalism—could find no rest in that jarring chaos, 'the religious world,' where nothing is perfect because everything is content to be alone. He had affinities and sympathies with all—and, therefore, was by all, in turns, attracted and repelled. In all forms of polity, in all sets of doctrine, he recognised a part of himself; and when he claimed it, was forthwith repudiated by some undiscerning brother—as the cygnet, drawn by its own image to the stream, affrights its foster brother fowl. In quick succession, if not all at once, Presbyterian and Prelatist, ultra-Protestant and Catholic, Republican and Tory, 'he seemed, not one, but all mankind's epitome.' The glorious eclecticism of his intellect, delighting equally in mathematics and poetry, in action and in meditation—the breadth of his scholastic training and literary recreations—the keenness of his social sympathies and of his love of nature—the intensity of his consciousness, that exaggerated the importance of his every undertaking, and magnified the defects of his every performance—the proud humility that made him pray rather to be taken from the service of God on earth, than be too much loved by those he served—the profound piety which *felt* a Providence in every incident—the lofty ideas of duty which gave a Spartan rigour to his virtue—the tenderness which gushed out over women and children, beauty, helplessness, and sorrow—all these coloured his religion till it seemed a fantastic and even lunatic thing to the men who had each some one or two of his qualities, but only one or two. It has been said that from being regarded as mad he

became so—that a native flaw in his composition was struck upon by a heedless world, as heedless in its kindness as in its neglect, till it widened and let out the life-blood of his reason. The reader may judge from this veracious history whether there be any truth in such a theory. To me, it seems that never was Edward Irving's genius more vigorous—never his giant faculties more under his command—than when he wrote the Statement of Facts for 'Fraser,' or stood at the bar of Annan Presbytery. Heart-sore he doubtless was, from the pangs of sorrow, public and domestic, he had suffered—and broken in body, by long excess of labour—but the eye of his mind was undimmed, and the force of his mental arm unabated. It has been speculated whether he would have not sought in the bosom of the Church of Rome the repose that so many wearied spirits have found there. Of this, too, the reader may judge. To me it seems probable, almost to certainty, that had he lived to this twenty-first year from the year of his re-ordination, he would have continued in the Church of which he was then made a minister—finding therein sphere enough for all the strength that a life of over-toil had left; and ample satisfaction for the yearnings of his noble heart. If I understand aright *his* latest utterances and *its* standing testimony, they agree in this —that the Maker of this world is also its Redeemer; the Father of humanity, its Saviour; that to him that hath an ear to hear, there is a present message and a glorious destiny; but to all, a final revelation of grace. In such a faith and hope, surely the strongest may be content to wait, as the feeblest may dare to rejoice.

If this chapter were a formal summary and estimate of the career and character it has taken the foregoing chapters to narrate and depict, much might be said of some points in which Edward Irving proved himself in advance of his contemporaries, and has been justified by their subsequent arrival thereat—as in his perception of Wordsworth's paramount place in poetry; his assertion of independence in style; and his restoration of the pulpit to the rank of a social power. But it was the simple design of these concluding pages to show that he left in the people who by him were gathered together, and in the system they profess, his deliberate bequest to the world for which he had laboured with self-consuming love; and by them, is still vocal and powerful—a design strengthened, if not prompted, by a recent attack upon 'Irvingism,' associating it with 'Mormonism;' an insolence of inunendo to which only a religious controversialist would descend. That design accomplished, the writer may lay down his pen—reluctant at parting company with the noble spirit he has thus ventured to track through earth; and breathing the aspiration,—May we meet in some world where the radiant shadow shall again have become a human form, and I may speak, as with a friend, with him to whom I now look as on a star!

Farewell.

APPENDIX.

BEN-EZRA.

AMONG the Miscellaneous Labours commemorated in Chapter VI*, the translation from the Spanish of a work known as 'the Coming of the Messiah in Glory and Majesty, by Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra, a converted Jew,' would have had a conspicuous place, but from the circumstance that the writer was unable to procure a copy of the work, and was too imperfectly acquainted therewith to describe it from memory. It is to the kindness of Mrs. Irving that he is indebted for the ability to give, in this place, the following interesting facts and illustrations.

The name and character of Ben-Ezra are but assumed, the real author of the work in question being Father Lacunza, a Jesuit. The work was printed in Spain during the brief period of intellectual freedom enjoyed under the government of the Cortes; and was suppressed immediately that the Inquisition recovered its power. In 1816, a large edition was printed in England for circulation in the South American States; and it does not appear that a single copy remained in this country. The work became known, however, in France, and was forwarded thence to an English clergyman, who showed it to, among others, an intimate friend of Mr. Irving, who had begun, on Christmas Day, 1825, to preach that Second Advent of the Lord of which Ben-Ezra had written.

About the same time, he had begun to take lessons in Spanish from a refugee officer, rather from kindness to him than with serious intention of utility to himself. Ben-Ezra's work became the subject of much correspondence among the persons afterwards assembled or represented at the Albury conferences. At length, though very little way advanced in the knowledge of Spanish, Mr. Irving resolved himself to undertake the translation of the three volumes; and he found opportunity for this formidable undertaking in circumstances which, to most men, would have constituted an excuse for exemption. 'It pleased the Lord'—he writes—'to stir up the greater part of my flock to exhort me by all means, as I valued my own health, and their well-being, to remove a little from the bustle and intrusion of this great city, and abide in the country during some of the summer months; and two of the brethren, who love me much, engaged, unknown to me, a place in the country, where, without forsaking my charge, I might reside in peace and quietness amidst the beauty and bounty with which God hath covered the earth. This occurring so unexpectedly, at the time when all concerned were soliciting me to undertake the whole care and responsibility of the translation, and perceiving that the work was likely to suffer from a divided labour, without being at all hastened, I resolved at length, insignificant as was my knowledge of the language at that time, to conquer all difficulties, and heartily give myself to the Lord and to His Church during these weeks of retirement. For I was well convinced that the health I most needed was, the healing waters of the Holy Spirit, which I then made bold to solicit by devoting myself to His service. And, certainly, the labourer was not disappointed of his hire. I prevented the dawning of the morning, and I envied the setting-in of the shades of evening, to labour in my work; and when my hands and my eyes failed me because of weakness, the helper whom God hath given meet for me served me with hers; and so we laboured to bring this labour of love to completion, purposing to offer it to the Church as our

Christmas offering'—'and to the refugees as our Christmas benefaction,' he might have added; for to their relief the whole profits of the work were predestined.

Not content to labour thus at the work of translation, he wrote a Preliminary Discourse, which occupies nearly two hundred closely-printed octavo pages. This Discourse is in substance an exposition and defence of Lacunza's doctrine; but it contains so much characteristic of the writer, that many of these pages might appropriately be filled with extracts. Of the two or three for which alone we have space, the first relates to that great domestic sorrow of Irving's life, his pious use of which we have before remarked:—

'Whoso studieth as I have done, and reflecteth as I have sought to reflect, upon the twelve first months of a child; whoso hath had such a chiid to look and reflect upon as the Lord for fifteen months did bless me withal (whom I would not recall if a wish could recall him from the enjoyment and service of our dear Lord), will rather marvel how the growth of that wonderful creature, which put forth such a glorious bud of being, should come to be so cloaked by the flesh, cramped by the world, and cut short by Satan, as not to become a winged seraph; will rather wonder that such a puny, heartless, feeble thing as manhood, should be the abortive fruit of the rich bud of childhood, than think that childhood is an imperfect promise and opening of the future man. And therefore it is that I grudged not our noble, lovely child, but rather do delight that such a seed should blossom and bear in the kindly and kindred paradise of my God. And why should I not speak of thee, my Edward! seeing it was in the season of thy sickness and death, the Lord did reveal in me the knowledge, and hope, and desire, of his Son from heaven? Glorious exchange! He took my son to his own more fatherly bosom, and revealed in my bosom the sure expectation and faith of his own eternal Son. Dear season of my life, ever to be remembered, when I knew the sweetness and fruitfulness of such joy and sorrow.'

We have more than once observed the influence upon Mr. Irving of Coleridge's doctrine of the reason and understanding: here is another and emphatic evidence of the same kind:—

'Now if any one ask me, why the Lord hath adopted this prophetic method in the revelation of his Word, and not the logical, or the dogmatical, or the predicative, I answer, that it is the only one proper to a spirit which, like man's, is subjected to the conditions of place and time by being placed in a sentient body, and having a sensible world to rule. The method of intellection hath only to do with the full reason, and, therefore, is imperfect to a being like man. Yet, forasmuch as the pure reason is the noblest part of man, the truth, in whatever way conveyed, must contain the food of pure reason, which my dear friend, my kind and honoured instructor, Mr. Coleridge, hath well proved it to contain, in his valuable book, entitled 'Aids to Reflection;' from whom also I received the first idea of the prophetic growth of God's word: as what have I not received from Him? But when, besides the reason, the sense and understanding also are to be satisfied, it seems to me necessary that the truth conveyed should be surrounded with, and, as it were, embedded in, the conditions of space and succession; in order that, through the avenues of the bodily sense and natural understanding, the pure truth may pass into the soul, and, being there, redeem both soul and body from their fallen state. Whether it be an attribute of our fallen estate to be under the conditions of space and time, I cannot say; but, while we are so, I can perceive that, in order to satisfy them, the prophetic is the only proper method of a divine revelation. . . . All other causes of infidelity put together, are but as a feather in the scale compared with the evil effects of the books which have been written in defence of the Christian religion. The book we most want, as I have heard my sage friend referred to above oft remark, is, 'Christianity Defended from its Defenders.' For while they have removed the question into a dark corner

of time, and removed to the events of one particular spot of the earth, that evidence which resteth upon the events of all time, and the ever changing aspect of the Church and the world, they have withdrawn the mind of the Church from looking forward to the future, and fixed it upon an unproductive inspection of far distant and long past events: and these, not as the fulfilment of a series of purposes revealed from the beginning of the world, but as isolated events conveyed and brought down to us by means of extrinsical testimony. The fools have cut a brick out of the wall, and said, Look at this, and believe in the divine architecture of the palace from which it came: they have taken the main spring out of the watch, and presenting it to you, said, Go to, there's a chronometer for you of exquisite workmanship.'

The following passage will remind the reader of the more eloquent passages in the 'Argument for Judgment to Come:' but it seems also to suggest that enlargement in the author's view of human destiny which we at the time anticipated:—

'When I think what a weight of iniquity this round earth is now oppressed with—even now at this dead hour of night, when even wickedness should go to rest, when I think what an outcry of wickedness is ascending into the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth; what blasphemy, what riot, what revelry, what oppression, what murder, what sighing of the poor and needy, what ungodly mirth and feasting, what wantonness, what lust, what dishonesty and theft, are now proceeding under the eye of heaven upon the round of this earth; and when I further think that this hath been, that this ever hath been so, it would stagger me in my faith that there is a Holy God in heaven above, did I not know and believe in the infinite preciousness of that sacrifice, of that most holy sacrifice of Christ, which was offered and accepted from the foundation of the world. And what a thought, that this deluge of sin shall be baled out, that the long-covered hills and valleys of holiness shall again present themselves—that the slimy path of the serpent shall be cleansed out of all nations, and the alloy of

hell with fervent heat be burned out of the elements of the solid globe; that the kingdom, peopled with the souls and bodies of the redeemed, shall become meet to be presented in the presence of God, shall be given up to the Father, as a pure and a holy oblation, and remain for ever the most glorious monument of His almighty power to save;—this, this is, indeed, a consummation worthy that the Eternal Son of God should withdraw from the bosom of the Father; and none but he were worthy, as no one but he were able to travail in such a mighty work. I praise God who hath enabled me to comprehend something of the depth of this mystery of sanctification.' Only two pages further on, we find sentences that confirm the suggestion above expressed. 'The elect Church,' we there read, 'is the whole extent to which, for the present, the application of Christ's righteousness is extended. And why no further? Because so the order of God's wisdom willed it. But will it go no farther? Yes, it will. And how far? To the whole world. . . . . The dispensation of election is ended, and the dispensation of universality is begun.'

The whole concludes with an apostrophe conceived in the author's most characteristic spirit—a spirit of stern tenderness and lofty humility—and expressed in his purest, because most fitting, diction:—'I said it [the doctrine he has been advocating] maketh winged speed in all the Churches; but, alas! that Church to which I owe my reverence as to a mother, a bountiful though somewhat a stern mother to me, giveth little heed, that I can hear of, to this great, immediate, overwhelming truth. Do thou bless, O Lord, this second attempt of her unworthy son to awaken some of her fathers, some of her doctors, some of her ministers, some of her elders, some of her members, yea all, yea all, oh my God, if so it might be pleasing in thy sight, and according to thy will. For that our fathers did heretofore witness a good confession to this kingly office of thy Son, the stones which cover their bones do testify, in the moors and solitudes where they fell

martyrs to the doctrine of thy sole supremacy in thy house. Which these eyes can attest; for with unwearied feet I have visited them almost every one, and with keen eye spelt their moss-grown monuments, and do now delight to remember those the haunts of my early youth, upon this lonely watch-tower, where the Lord hath stationed me in his wonderful providence—mine appointed post, from which, by the grace of God, I shall make known unto the Church whatever I hear and see; fearing not, oh my Lord, these Pharisaical and Sadducean enemies with whom I am surrounded, nor caring that I have not that communion of the brethren for which my soul longeth. For am I not thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid, whose bands thou hast untied? And to whom, then, is my light of knowledge, my life of conscience, and my freedom of speech and action due, but unto thee, O my God and King! my Head, the Head of thy Church, the head of the worshipping universe! unto whom, with the Father and blessed Spirit, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.'

LAST WORDS.

Allusion has been made in Chapter XI to letters written by Mr. Irving, in his mortal illness, to his church in London. These letters, with part of a third, addressed to himself, were, by Mr. Cardale, a minister of the church, presented to the members in a printed form. Their unauthorized publication, in religious periodicals, caused at the time regret and misunderstanding. But for this circumstance, and their explanation by the foregoing narrative, they would not here be given—as they are naturally held in peculiar, and somewhat sacred, estimation by the community to whom they belong.

To the Flock of God, which the Lord Jesus Christ hath given into my hand to keep and to bless them, with the Elders and Deacons.

DEARLY BELOVED MINISTERS AND MEMBERS OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST,

IT well becometh me, who was the chief instrument of bringing in that sin for which the hand of the Lord hath long lain heavy upon us, to do my utmost part to remove the same, that He may again lift upon us the light of His countenance: and, because no sin can be removed otherwise than by the confession of it, and our confessions are greatly helped by our knowledge, discernment, and hatred of the sin which we would confess, I think that I shall best serve my God, and my flock, and the quiet of my own soul, and the health of my body also, by endeavouring to lead you into the nature and aggravation of that sin of ours, which the Lord nameth and describeth by "the making of a calf."

You will understand then, my dearly beloved, that the Lord, in His great grace towards London, the city of our habitation, hath purposed for the good of the whole Church, to set therein a complete and perfect pattern of what His Church should be, endowed with a fulness of the Holy Ghost; that is, having no lack of any gift or grace or fruit of the Spirit, to shine with holy beauties, not only through this land but unto the whole earth, that the people may come up hither, as heretofore they did to Zion and Jerusalem, in order to learn the way and word of the Lord. This is the great purpose of good which our God is slowly but surely accomplishing unto the faith and prayers of all his children who call upon His name. Of this purpose we have dared to hinder Him; we have plotted against it to bring another to pass; and it is of His mercy

that we have not been dashed to pieces in the kindlings of His wrath. It is true we did it in ignorance : but we should not have been ignorant of the way of our God, having Prophets to reveal it, and Apostles to dispense and order it, according to the mind of the Holy Spirit, who speaketh by them ; and having Pastors to break down the revelations of God in simple and faithful ministrations unto the people ; and having, moreover, the Holy Unction of the body of Christ, by which we should be able to know the truth, and to be kept from all seducers. But our fatness of heart, our fulness of bread, and our misuse of the Lord's most blessed gift of His word spoken in the midst of us, brought it to pass that we fell easily into the snare of the devil, by which he thought to mar and to thwart the purpose of our God. Oh! I came far short in the office of the good Shepherd, not to have been your watchman and your guardian in that day ; for which I do now taste the bitterness of sorrow in my heart, and the hand of the Lord upon my flesh.—But to return to my purpose of shewing you our sin. Understand, dearly beloved, that such a fulness of the Spirit as our God proposeth to give to His Church in London can only stand under the headship, government, and administration of the Lord Jesus. No Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, nor Pastor, no Angel of any church, no man nor creature, hath more than a measure of the Spirit, nor can occupy nor administer more than a measure or proportion of the Spirit. To Jesus alone pertaineth the fulness, and to the Church over which He ruleth. And seeing He hath given it forth as His purpose to give unto His Church in London a fulness of the Spirit, He himself must rule over it. He that sitteth between the cherubim alone ruleth over them. But we were beguiled to think that the full measure of the tabernacle of the Lord would be given to that Church over which I preside as Angel ; which was no less than the exalting of the Angel of the Church into the place of Christ. I tremble when I think of the awfully perilous place into which I was thrust. Now, the figure by which the eldership is known in

Scripture is the calf; and this exaltation of the Angel of the Church to sit head over the fulness of the Spirit, was truly the making of the calf to worship it, instead of worshipping Him who sitteth between the cherubim. I speak not, at present, of the injury and dishonour done to the other ministries of Christ by this setting up of one. I am contemplating our sin as it beareth upon Christ himself, upon the person of the Son of God; and I do see it as nothing less than a cunningly contrived plot to take out of His hands the dearest and noblest of all His prerogatives, that of Head of the Church, and giving it to another. In the same light I see the naming of Evangelists by me, which pertains not to any one but to the Second Adam; His it is to give names to every beast and every tree in the spiritual Eden. And of this also I do repent, and call upon the whole flock to repent along with me. In the same light also do I see the sending forth of the Evangelists unordained, which was the slighting of Jesus, the Apostle in his Apostles, to whom it appertaineth to send forth. In all these things I grievously sinned against the Lord, and you with me. We were blinded. We were unwatchful. We were covetous. We were contented to be made rich. We thought not upon the poverty of others. We were impatient of the government of Apostles, of the Lord in them. We sought independence as a church; and, but for the grace of God, we had reaped the very independence of Satan.

God saw that it was not in our heart to do these things: He saw that nothing was farther from our hearts; that we had been taken, through our simplicity, by the craft of the devil; and therefore He had mercy upon us, and began to take the veil from off our eyes by the hand of His Apostles, to whom he gave timeous discernment of these things, with utterance of that which they discerned; but I confess for myself that I was very slow, yea, and reluctant to turn back from my evil way: whereto I do trace the heavy chastisement of the love of my God; and the Lord hath declared that there was the

same cleaving to the evil thing in the elders and in the people. Let us now, my dear children, be of one mind to put it away with abhorrence and loathing, that we should have been found in such deceivableness and so fearfully deceived. For I am assured, that though the Lord shewed us at the last Communion such a token for good, it was unto the awakening of us, by His returning love, to consider our past ways, and with haste to turn our feet into the way of his commandments. But, if we remain in a state of lethargy, not laying this thing to heart, nor truly repenting of it, I know not with what new and more severe trials He will try both you and me. I have a good hope, however, in my heart, that there will be an awakening to understand the purpose of the Lord, and patiently to wait for it. Yet am I not without fears for some, lest they turn aside from the way of the Lord, and abide in their former ways, which are not good. Oh! remember, my beloved, that we are not now what we were when the Lord's word did find us: we are called, and chosen, and set apart to a great work, which the Lord seeketh to accomplish in and by us, and for all His Church, yea, for all the world. We may not dwell in our ceiled houses: we may not abide by the sheepcotes: still less may we lie down beside the flesh-pots of Egypt; but we must gird up the loins of our mind, and go forward. We must bear the burden of the Lord: we must remember that his presence is in the midst of us, and take off the shoes from our feet, because the place where we stand is holy ground. It is the word of the Lord which we have received to keep holy, and to obey. And blessed be the Lord that He hath kept the witness of the Spirit in the midst of us, and reproved every one who hath been betrayed into any mingling of His Word. Oh! reverence the word of the Lord whenever it is spoken amongst you. Ye elders, reverence it; ye people, reverence it. Cry for the prophet, for he was a chosen vessel. Hold ye him against his own rebellious heart. Let him not go; and if he will not return, oh! be ye guiltless of his fall. For myself, while I am conscious of being led

about by the Lord amongst His servants, and of being used by Him in giving them counsel, I am also conscious of His hand abiding upon me to weaken me; nor do I expect to see it removed until we have together thoroughly repented of our sin, and been cleansed from it in our inward parts. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

Your faithful and loving Pastor,

EDWARD IRVING.

Glasgow, Oct. 25, 1834.

MY DEARLY BELOVED FLOCK,

I do find that no time nor place doth separate you from my heart, that you should not be dearer to me than my own life. It is the Lord who hath joined this bond of love, which death itself shall not divide; for are ye not our crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? Dearly beloved, you must not be sore troubled when I tell you that the hand of the Lord to afflict me is heavier upon me than it hath ever been. I am greatly weakened and wasted, and have little strength for anything save to pray unto the Lord. Yet am I nowise cast down in spirit, desiring only the glory of the Lord in whatever way He shall be pleased to reveal it. Yet is it a sore thing that for our sin we should thus be visited at the hand of a gracious God. Let us repent, and humble ourselves more and more, and walk more and more softly and tenderly in the sight of our God, putting away all vanities and idolatries, if haply our God may have mercy upon us, and remove far away the stroke of His hand.

Much have I sought to find out, and much have I besought the Lord to reveal unto me, the manifold causes of this sad separation and utter weakening of your head; and it is made manifest unto me that we have not been taught by the *Word* of the Lord: we have not been broken by it, neither I nor

you; and, therefore, the Lord hath come in with His judgments, and laid his hand upon the head of the offence, and will utterly cut us off except we repent. Our hardness and impenitency of heart, under those streams of love which flowed fresh from the bosom of God, hath at length provoked Him to anger, and He hath arisen in His faithfulness to smite the shepherd of the flock: and I confess that in righteousness He doth afflict, yea, and in mercy, and in loving kindness; and if He should slay me with the sword of His judgment, I would justify the dealing of His mercy, and put my trust in Him. Oh! I have had many deep exercises of soul in my absence from you, and Satan hath been suffered to buffet me; but the Lord hath stood with me, and brought me up out of the depths, and comforted me with His own free Spirit. My confidence in Him in whom I have believed hath been enlarged, together with the assurance that He hath arisen up to build His Zion and Jerusalem, that the nations and kings may assemble all to praise the Lord. But, oh! my children, we have held this faith with a slack hand, with an unjoyful heart; and, therefore, the Lord hath been provoked to smite. I have sinned, and you have sinned, in not yielding to the voice of the Lord, by reason of the hardness of our hearts, and now the Lord breaketh them with sorrow. Sure I am that this affliction is to the working of tenderness of heart both in you and in me. Moreover, I discern that the Lord will utterly separate my name from the work which He worketh for the blessing of the whole world. Oh! what a grief it hath been to me that my name should be familiarly joined with the work of the Lord. Ofttimes in my prayer I have been so ashamed and grieved that there should be any name but the name of Jesus, that I have almost besought the Lord to be taken out of the way, rather than eclipse in any way the name of His honourable Son. And it is, indeed, my chief consolation in being so far apart from you, my children, and our brethren around us, that it will be seen, even by the enemies of the Lord's work, how little I have had to do with it—how little

any of us have had to do with it, save to mar and hinder it. Again, I have discerned that the Lord, who had made me strong in the flesh to serve Him, would in me first give before the Church the fulfilment of that word, "All flesh is grass, and the glory of it is as the flower of the grass." The hand of the Lord hath touched me, and I am consumed like the moth: but He sendeth forth his quickening Spirit, and the decayed face of the earth is renewed again. Oh! cry ye for the outpouring of the Spirit, then shall there be the melody of health and joy in the habitations of the righteous.

Dearly beloved in the Lord, give thanks and rejoice together, for the Lord hath heard your prayers and helped His servant. Since the last Lord's-day, when ye partook of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, I have been sensibly revived with a little strength, and have been able to resume the exercise which is recommended, viz., riding on horseback; and I am able to conduct the worship of the family, who have received us under their roof with joy. Oh! rejoice ye in the blessings of the Church of God; for sad, sad is the condition of many in these parts, who received the Gospel gladly, but have not been builded into a church. It is the great grace of God to this city, and to Greenock, and to Paisley, to have begun to build His people into the unity of the Church. Surely it is the fold whereof the Porter keepeth well the door; but, oh! give Him the glory of your safety: so in Him shall ye go in and out, and find pasture. Ye ministers of His, let the Word that was with God, that was God, speak through you all; and ye people of the Lord, into the ear of the Holy Ghost, which abideth in you, let the word of God be spoken. So shall you be His witness along with the other Churches of the brethren, the pillar and ground of the truth. Be ye of one heart and of one mind in the Lord. Put away divisions and doubtings, for is not the unchangeable God your trust?

Peace be with you and with all the Israel of God. From

Your faithful and loving Pastor,

EDWARD IRVING.

Extract of a Letter addressed by the Rev. E. Irving to Mr. Cardale.

Glasgow, Nov. 5, 1834.

The hand of the Lord is still upon me as heretofore, under which I desire to be humbled with all the flock, and to wait and learn the purpose of the Lord in such a separation. Oft-times I think that it is the Lord's gentle hand, breaking that bond by degrees between me and my flock, which threatened to grow up into a kind of necessity, and even to pass over into idolatry. O how I love them! how I am thankful to them! how I am laden with their benefits! And I am sure that their love to me is stronger than my love to them, and I do see it is of the great goodness and tenderness of God to take order that such affection should be stayed from passing over into unholiness; and that He hath done us a great favour to put us so far asunder, and for such a time, that we might try our hearts and prove ourselves that our mutual love is in the Lord. O how terrible a thing it is in any way to eclipse or defraud that Brother, who purchased every soul with the blood of God! O be thou jealous for Him, my dear son, and jealous for that Church which He hath betrothed unto himself a chaste virgin. O let no minister of Jesus seek to win her affections unto himself, for doth he not therein withdraw them from her Husband—from his Lord.

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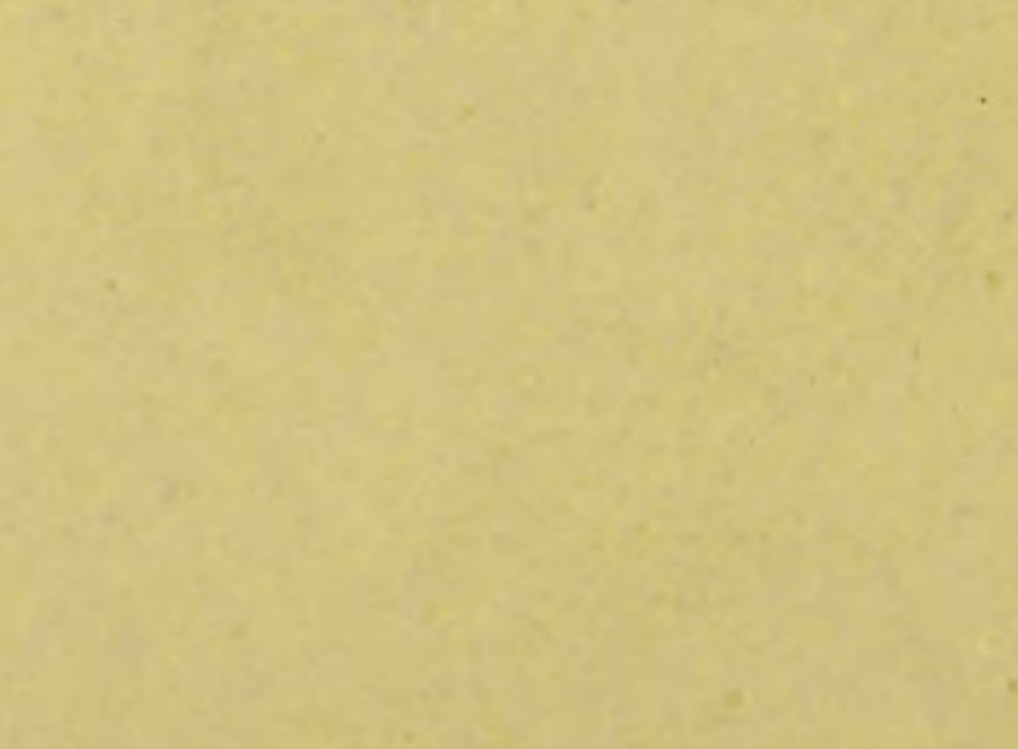

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